Negotiating differences in mixed marriages

Christians and Muslims in Greece

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Abstract

Christian - Muslim mixed couples in Greece challenge marital norms and group identifications through re-negotiation of religious affiliations, identifications and practices. They are sociologically significant because they contest historically and socially constructed ethnic, cultural and religious differentiations in the specific Greek context. These couples link nuanced and subtle dimensions of conjugal mixedness in the family formation process with Muslim migration and the indigenous Muslim minority communities.

My doctoral research analyses religious negotiations, practices and strategies of mixed Christian - Muslim families in Greece and investigates intergenerational transmissions and interactions between mixed couples and extended families in transnational and translocal networks of social relationships. The research draws on in-depth interviews with Christian and Muslim participants of diverse socioeconomic characteristics and national background. Analysing mixed marriages according to the institutional affiliation to Islam and Orthodox Christianity captured Christian - Muslim intermarriage with different Muslim populations: Near, Middle East and South East Asian Muslim-born immigrants, native minority Muslims and Greek converts to Islam.

I follow intermarriage as an iterative process of trajectories and awakenings to mixedness and present identity shifts and exchanges, negotiations and practices during the family formation process. Novel data on the everyday and festive, religious and social practices of mixed and homogamous families shed light on how mixed couples put their worldviews into practice and how religious practice is incorporated into mixed family life. Conjugal mixedness is reproduced and represented, asserted and contested in religious, cultural and ethnic transmissions, parenting, “multiple-mixing” upbringing and naming of children in Christian – Muslim families.

Intermarriage has acquired social visibility in Greece, even though is far from being integrated as a social norm. Mixed couples live, reside and locate themselves within the specific socioeconomic context of economic and humanitarian crisis in contemporary Greece. There are different lifestyle patterns of multilevel being, living and belonging of mixed couples within Greek society. Discrimination, racism and xenophobia against immigrants and minorities provoke social exclusion and precariousness for some mixed couples that are socially visible and mostly affected by phenotypical prejudice. Social processes of exclusion do not result only from ‘being’ a foreigner or an immigrant, they also result from ‘being with’ a foreigner or an immigrant.

Religion as a social signifier of mixedness differs significantly from one relationship to another. The many facets of differentiation in mixed Christian and Muslim relationships are combined to produce distinctive and unique forms of conjugal mixedness in a wide repertoire of moral, cultural and religious systems. My research contributes knowledge in the study of intermarriage and mixedness by bringing religion into focus and analysing dynamic and negotiable self-identifications with ethno-cultural and religious affiliations and practices in Christian – Muslim conjugal mixedness and family formation. It takes the analysis beyond a simple focus on religion to link family with migration and minoritisation social processes and reveal complicated border crossings through conversion, intersections between gender, class, power and agency and potential of intermarriage for sociocultural transformations through interactions, exchanges and reciprocity of mixed couples and their extended families in transnational and translocal social networks.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

"Life chances condition lifestyle choices"
(Giddens, 1991)

Mixed Christian – Muslim couples in Greece link family, Muslim migration and Muslim minorities within the specific Greek social, historical, political and legal context. The co-existence, contradiction and tension between 'Old' Islam, the indigenous Muslim minorities that are a heritage of the Ottoman period, and 'new' Islam, which resulted from recent migration inflows to Greece, constitute the main specificity of the Greek case in the current debates on the presence of Islam in Europe (Evergeti et al., 2014; Tsitselikis, 2012b). Mixed Christian – Muslim couples in Greece are sociologically significant because they challenge historically and socially constructed ethnic, cultural and religious differentiations. The religious otherness of Islam is associated with the essential 'Other' of Greece, rather than contrasted to a secular public space (Hatziprokopiou and Evergeti, 2014). Intermarriage lies at the intersection between the private sphere – mate selection, conjugal relations and family transmissions – and the public domain, where ethnic, racial and religious diversity defines our contemporary societies (Collet, 2012; 2015).

Western societies in the post 9/11 era have constructed a specific framework that fits into discourses on Christian – Muslim relations, but this frame is limiting and unrealistic for ethnographic research, since every human being has many affiliations that are prioritised differently according to the context a person finds themselves in (Antoniou, 2010). There is a serious risk of creating formalistic bipolarities - such as Christian vs. Muslim – and overlooking that these are global religions, encompassing civilisations, cultures and worldviews that converge and diverge. According to Levitt (2008:772), *"there are few differences in moral values throughout the globe; there is much more consistency across civilisations than within them".* Religions are usually fractured along authoritarian or fundamentalist tendencies and progressive or liberal tendencies (Hunter, 1991; Inglehart and Norris, 2003a; Plummer, 2005).

New religious alignments designate that the orthodox within each tradition are more likely to share common values and causes with the orthodox from other traditions than with the progressives within their own traditions defined by the spirit of modernity, rationalism and subjectivism (Hunter and Wolfe, 2006).

The stereotypical invoking of religion in the interpretation of complex social phenomena leads to simplistic conclusions and closed hermeneutical patterns in which religion is often confounded with culture (Zaimakis and Kaprani, 2005). Ethnicity, culture and religion are inextricably interrelated in social positionalities and identifications, while other factors such as social status and gender should, also, be analytically considered. Religious identities are temporal and contextual. Religiosity is seen as fluid, non-fixed, negotiable and variable. Ways of being Muslim (or Christian) may change through the life course (Ryan, 2013a), while 'being Muslim' (or Christian) means different things in different places (Oktem, 2010). Multiple processes of movement and transformations in terms of religious beliefs, cultural practices and social networks occur during the life cycle and can be intensified under life events, such as family formation and child birth.

Transnational projects can result from ethnically heterogamous, interethnic or intercultural marriages (Williams, 2012). When people live lives that cross borders, they belong to communities, influenced by several cultural contexts at the same time (Levitt, 2008). Mixed Christian - Muslim marriages challenge social norms of marriage and group identifications and offer insight to how religious beliefs and practices are enacted across ethnic, religious and symbolic borders. Islam which was considered previously a religion historically and symbolically "beyond the borders", is being re-introduced in the new multi-religious situation in Greece through immigration, intermarriage and religious conversion to Islam. Although nationalist imageries of the homogeneity of the Greek population and debates on "endogamic" reproduction remain at the core of constructions of Greekness, "mixtures" through social transformations are nonetheless taking place in the domain of family relations (Petronoti and Papagaroufali, 2006). Xenophobic, nationalistic and discriminatory attitudes against immigrants and religious minorities stem from constructing the different 'Other' as foreign or inferior. Social disapproval of exogamous marital choices is the result of abusive generalisations, collective representations and interpretation of certain features as signs of inferiority: dark colour among a mainly white population, different religion than the one of the reference group, foreign culture, or just the simple, hard truth of being a foreigner (Collet, 2015).

Society is losing any grand narrative of how to live personal life (Plummer, 2005). Life in a bicultural family, because it cannot be inserted into a grand narrative, is a life involving biographical uncertainty (Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). Biographical uncertainty in mixed families produces reflexivity, flexibility of implementation of a 'family project', space for creative forms and innovative social strategies that 'mix' multiple religions and cultures. Mixed couples, under study, are, simultaneously, interreligious, intercultural, interethnic or interracial. I use the term 'mixed' couples, families or relationships without qualifiers to encompass the range of their ethnic, cultural and religious diversity. I, also, use the term 'intermarriage' interchangeably with mixed marriages to indicate a marriage between two people of different ethnic, cultural or religious background. Adjectives such as interethnic, intercultural or interreligious are purposefully used to emphasise the specificities of the mixedness. It is important to note that I refer to mixed relationships as "Christian – Muslim" to indicate the specific interreligious nature of their mixedness, without intentionally or inherently suggesting any power relationship of the majority preceding over the minority population in the Greek context.

Mixed Christian – Muslim couples in Greece have very diverse profiles. Each couple creates its own forms and strategies that are contingent upon multiple factors. Each one has their own personal trajectories and background. Many questions arise: how they met, where they come from, what religion means to them, whether they choose a single culture or religion or try to 'mix' elements of both, if they feel existentially secure and integrated within Greek society, where they live, what plans they have for the future. The answers to these questions can be very different for a minority Muslim of Turkish ethnic origin with Greek citizenship compared to an Afghan Muslim asylum seeker. All these factors will be combined to form how each mixed couple lives out its own story; its own distinctive version of mixed family culture.

Research aims

The objectives of this doctoral research are to investigate the religious negotiations, practices and strategies of mixed Christian - Muslim families in Greece; to analyse themes, patterns and processes that emerge from their cultural, social and religious strategies; and to study the social interactions and social networks that have developed between mixed couples and their extended families, between ethnic or religious groups, migrant and minority communities, in Greek society or across borders.

Research questions

How do Christian and Muslim partners in mixed relationships negotiate their religious identities, affiliations and beliefs?

How do different religious belief systems, cultural values and religious symbols become integrated in the family framework?

How have religious practices of mixed families emerged, developed, been negotiated and re-negotiated under the influence of time, life events, experience and other factors?

How are religious belief systems, cultural values and religious traditions put into practice as part of the everyday routine of mixed couples, festive family celebrations and encounters with the extended families?

How do Muslim and Christian family members celebrate feasts when they come together?

What do the strategies of religious and naming affiliations, religious education or nurture, parenting and upbringing of children in mixed Christian - Muslim families in Greece reveal about identity negotiations and family dynamics?

What kind of transnational family and kinship relationships have developed between the mixed couple and their extended families?

How have mixed Christian - Muslim couples been integrated within Greek society, especially under the current socioeconomic conditions of the economic crisis and the increase of racism and xenophobia in Greece?

PhD thesis structure

Chapter 1 has introduced the research context on mixed Christian – Muslim families in Greece, the research aims and the research questions. It argues that mixed Christian – Muslim couples in Greece are sociologically significant, because they challenge social marital norms and negotiate historically and socially constructed ethnic, cultural and religious differentiations. It presents statistical data on mixed marriages and migration in Greece and examines the basic characteristics of the Muslim populations under study. It weaves the historical, political, social

and legal context in which this research is contained, as well as the structural systems, policies and legal frameworks that regulate Christian - Muslim intermarriage in Greece. The interplay between the characteristics of the Muslim migration to Greece and the Greek "marriage market" endeavours to outline tendencies of intermarriage in Greece.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature on mixed families and intermarriage. It contextualises this research on mixed Christian – Muslim couples in Greece in the academic literature on family-related migration and family transnationalism. It focuses on the social marital norms with emphasis on how these norms are applied in Greek society, and especially the Muslim minority communities of Western Thrace. Emotions and inequalities, gender and religion are, also, examined in relation to mixed marriages and migration. The religious practices of Muslim migrants and Muslim minorities in Greece are highly pertinent to the purpose of this study. Lastly, it presents an emerging research field on parenting children of mixed-family background.

Chapter 3 presents and describes analytically the research methodology and the research design of this doctoral study. It outlines the sampling strategy, the access to and recruitment of participants and the data collection methods of single, joint and online interviewing. Special attention is given to research ethics and reflexivity by presenting anecdotal evidence from field research in the form of a research diary and the researcher's reflective notes on positionalities and the resignification of personal memories and experiences in the research context. It includes the description and analysis of techniques of qualitative data storage and management, a report of the sample population demographic characteristics and data coding strategies with qualitative data computer assisted software.

Chapter 4 follows Christian - Muslim mixed relationships in Greece on an empirical, thematic and sequential itinerary, from multiple migratory and non-migratory trajectories through family formation processes. Awakenings towards mixedness underline the salience of social inequalities based on religious and ethnic divides, racialisation of identities due to minoritisation processes, as well as preferences, opportunities and celebratory aspects of intermarriage. The wedding - religious, civil or symbolic – is an important developmental phase in the family life cycle. Non-married relationships, resistance to intermarriage and family reactions to gendered, religious, and, ethnic exogamy, reveal tensions and challenges to marital norms and group identifications in Greek society.

Chapter 5 focuses on religious negotiations as a process of identity shifts between Christian and Muslim partners in mixed relationships and diverse religious, social and cultural practices as part of everyday practices, festive family celebrations and encounters with the extended families. In mixed relationships, conventionally religious partners oscillate between religious conversion and 'mixture', devising their own strategy of interreligious family culture. In homogamous relationships, conservative religious partners attain homogamy through conjugal adjustment either to the dominant religion and culture of the host society or the integration into the sociocultural world of the immigrant partner. Negotiations are put into practice in the reintegrated mixed family context and religious identities are actively enacted, performed and contested in festive encounters between the mixed couple and the extended family.

Chapter 6 explores strategies of religious and cultural transmissions, parenting and "multiple-mixing" upbringing of children in Christian - Muslim families in Greece. The following strategies of religious affiliations of children in mixed faith families are examined: children may be affiliated to an institutional religion and identify with one single religious tradition; children may be affiliated to an institutional religion, but be exposed to plural and diverse religious traditions as part of their "multiple-mixing" upbringing; or children may not be affiliated to any religion, but be encouraged to develop critical thinking and be free "to choose or not to choose". Lastly, it approaches name conferral as a social process of belonging across ethnic, cultural and religious affiliations and as a strategic choice of identity management.

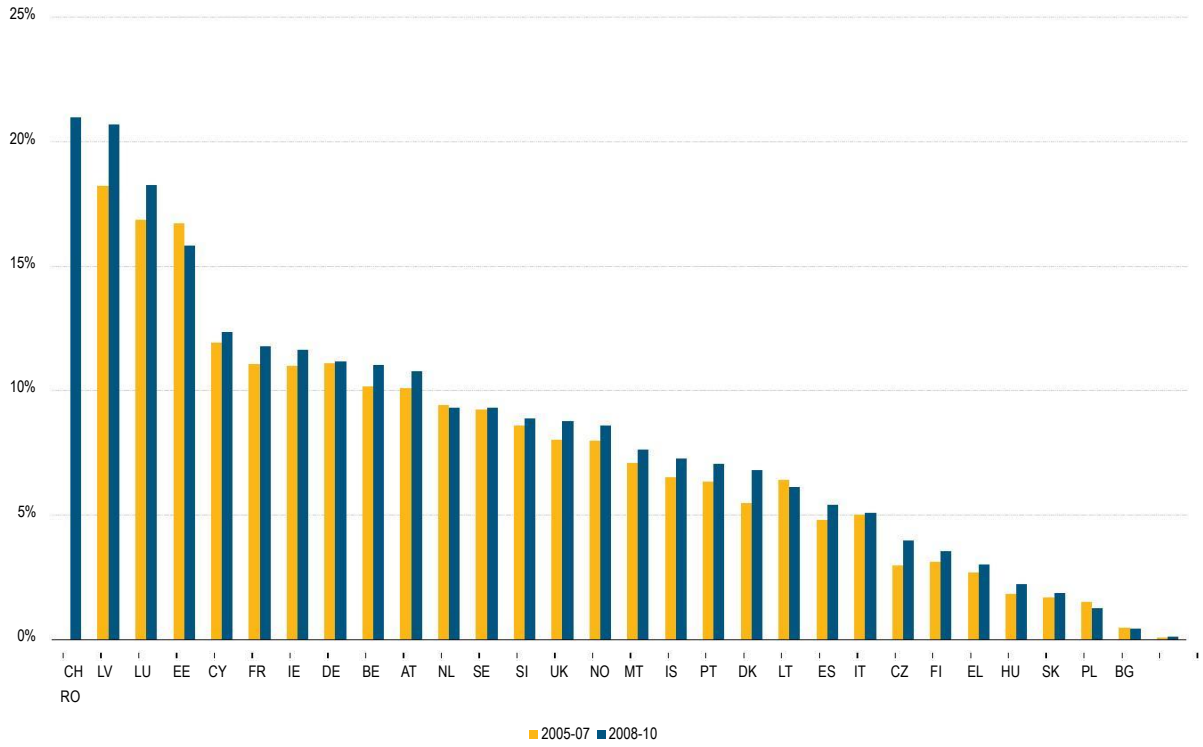
Chapter 7 addresses integration and precariousness of mixed Christian - Muslim families in Greece. The integration dynamics of mixed or homogamous relationships in the host society are analysed in terms of their language skills, socioeconomic characteristics, education, housing conditions and social, legal and political embeddedness. Social resistance to intermarriage and phenomena of racism, xenophobia and discrimination affect, especially, highly visible Muslim migrants, minority Muslims and Greeks who have transcended boundaries through intermarriage. Although the positionality and social visibility of the mixed couples are located within the specific socioeconomic conditions of an unprecedented economic and humanitarian crisis in Greece, mixed couples' acquisition of social and cultural capital is transferable to multiple transnational family and social fields. Mixed couples act back upon the specific conditions by adjusting their strategies of settlement or migration and developing transnational family and social relationships that link together migrants' societies of origin and settlement.

Chapter 8 discusses theoretical aspects of mixedness, religion as a social signifier of mixed relationships, the contribution of my doctoral research to knowledge, the significance, added value and new insights of this research, and further areas of scholarship.

Statistical data on mixed marriages and migration in Greece

Mixed marriages in European Union member states show a steady increase over time. The percentage of mixed couples out of total married couples in the period 2005-2010 in Greece, as shown in figure 1.1., is less than 5%, considerably lower than the percentages in North West European countries. In general, countries in which immigration is a more recent phenomenon or is less relevant show lower values, while the geographic distribution suggests a North-West / South-East divide, with some exceptions such as the Baltic countries (Lanzieri, 2012b).

Figure 1.1. Averages for 2005-07 and 2008-10 of the percentage of mixed couples on total married couples by country (countries sorted by descending order in the period 2008-10)



Source: Labour Force Survey (LFS), supplemented with data from the Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) (Lanzieri, 2012b).

Immigration is a recent phenomenon in Greece that is associated with the geopolitical changes in 1989. Greece is a new host country in South-Eastern Europe of mainly undocumented immigrants from Central and Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union and the Third World (Gropas and Triandafyllidou, 2007). Immigrants originating from Islamic countries or countries with an Islamic tradition are connected with recent migration flows starting in the 1970s and reaching a peak in the 1990s (Antoniou, 2003; Tsitselikis, 2012a). According to the 2011 National Census data, there are 713,000 third country nationals and 199,000 (non-Greek) EU citizens in Greece accounting respectively for 6.5% and 1.8% of the total resident population (Triandafyllidou et al., 2014).

Table 1.1. Stock of Foreign Population according to National Census Data, Greece, 2011

	Size of immigrant stock	**% of total resident population**
Total TCN population	713,000	6.59
Total EU (non-Greek) population	199,000	1.84
Total immigrant stock	912,000	8.43
Total population of Greece	10,815,197	100.00

Source: Hellenic Statistical Authority (EL.STAT.), National Census 2011 (as cited in Triandafyllidou et al., 2014)

The Hellenic Statistical Authority (EL.STAT.) measures the flow of marriages per nationality i.e. the number of marriages conducted each year in Greece. There is no data on the stock of mixed marriages in Greece (Lanzieri, 2012a). Data analysis of marriages per nationality in the period 2004-2012 shows that there have been 41.137 mixed marriages that represented 8.1% of the total 505.453 marriages in Greece.

Table 1.2. Marriages in Greece in the period 2004 -2012

Marriages between Greek citizens	**Mixed (Greek / non-Greek citizens)**	**Marriages between third country nationals**	**Total of marriages**
435.549	41.137	28.767	505.453
86.17%	8.14%	5.69%	100%

Source: Own calculations based on Hellenic Statistical Authority database (Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2011; 2013)

There has been an increase in mixed marriages in Greece, especially in the period 2007-2011. There has, also, been a considerable increase in mixed marriages between third country

nationals that could indicate a tendency of stabilisation of migration into permanent settlement in Greece.

Source: Own calculations based on Hellenic Statistical Authority database (Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2011; 2013)

Mixed marriages occur mainly between Greek citizens and migrants coming from the most sizeable immigrant groups in Greece. The largest immigrant groups are Albanians (480,000), Bulgarians (75,000), Romanians (46,000), Pakistanis (34,000), Georgians (27,000), Ukrainians (17,000) and Poles (14,000).

Table 1.3. National Composition of the Migrant Population

Country of Origin	Number	Percentage
Albania	480,851	52.72
Bulgaria	75,917	8.32
Romania	46,524	5.10
Pakistan	34,178	3.75
Georgia	27,407	3.01
Ukraine	17,008	1.86
UK	15,388	1.69
Cyprus	14,448	1.58
Poland	14,145	1.55
Russia	13,809	1.51
India	11,333	1.24
Germany	10,782	1.18
Egypt	10,455	1.15
Moldova	10,391	1.14
Philippines	9,807	1.08
Armenia	8,113	0.89

Syria	7,628	0.84
Afghanistan	6,911	0.76
USA	5,773	0.63
Other	80,056	8.78
TOTAL	912,000	100.00

Source: Hellenic Statistical Authority (EL.STAT.), National Census data 2011 (as cited in Triandafyllidou et al., 2014)

The main types of mixed marriages that are recorded in Greece according to nationality and gender are mostly between:

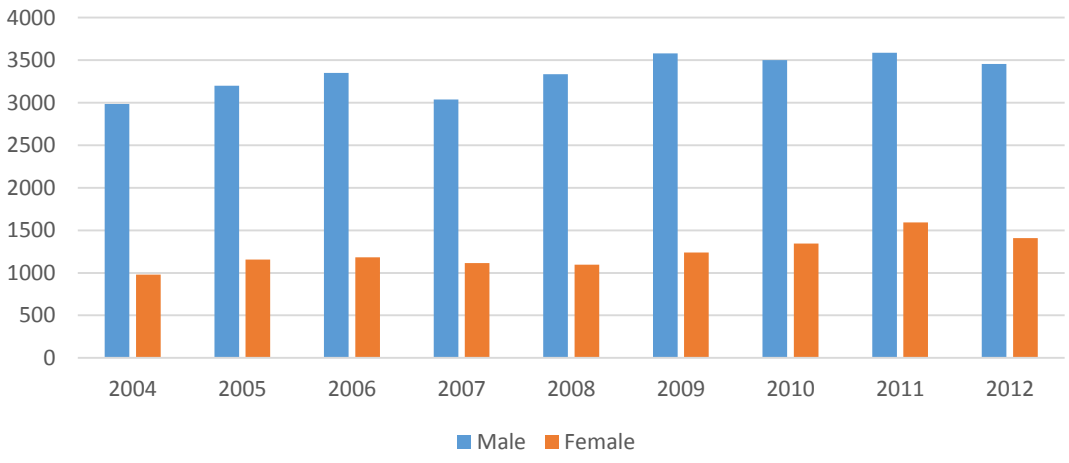
a) Migrants from former socialist countries and Greek citizens, especially Greek men marrying women from Albania, Poland, Romania, Russia, Moldova, Georgia, Bulgaria and Serbia – Montenegro. Greek - Albanian mixed marriages represent 16% of the total mixed marriages in Greece.

b) European Union nationals from Western industrialised countries (like UK, US, Germany, Italy) and Greek citizens.

c) Greek women and men from predominantly Muslim countries (Pakistan, Turkey, Egypt, Syria), from former socialist countries (Albania, Russia, Georgia) and African countries.

Greek men are three times as likely to marry out of their ethnic group. In the period 2004-2012, 30.027 mixed marriages were recorded between Greek men and female third country nationals, compared to 11.110 mixed marriages between Greek women and male ethnic other.

Graph 1.3. Mixed marriages according to nationality in the period 2004 - 2012 in Greece (gender distribution)



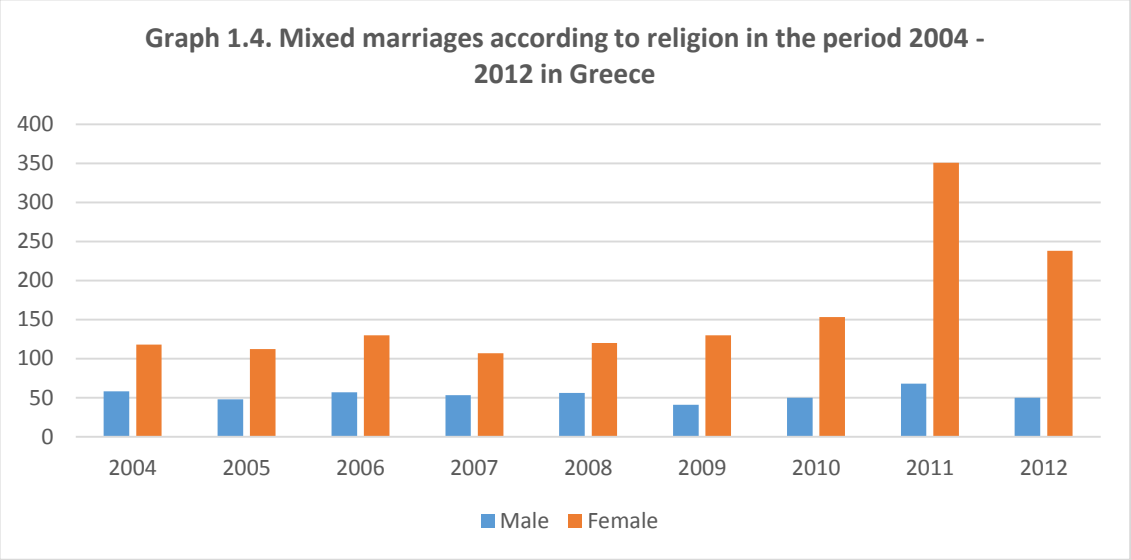
Source: Own calculations based on EL.STAT database (personal communication, 2011; 2013)

There are no available data on the religious affiliation of immigrant populations and on interreligious relationships in Greece (Tsitselikis, 2012a). Estimates of Muslim population groups in Greece are based on proxy measures, such as nationality (Baldwin-Edwards, 2008). The estimated Muslim population in 2008, including both Greek and non-Greek citizens, was 350,000, making 3.1% of the total population of 11,000,000 (Tsitselikis, 2012a). Given the lack of data on the religious affiliations of conjugal partners, I have, also, used nationality as proxy measure in order to filter data and estimate interreligious marriages between Muslim and Christian partners. Following the categorisations proposed by Baldwin-Edwards (2008), I have used the following predominantly Muslim countries in order to estimate interreligious marriages in Greece: Algeria, Bangladesh, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Pakistan, Palestine, Syria, Sudan, Tunisia and Turkey. The use of nationality as a proxy for religious affiliation based on the official national statistics can prove problematic and prone to statistical errors. According to Collet (2012; 2015), nationality is an "unsatisfactory criterion" for measuring mixed marriages as it is not accurate to define if a couple is mixed or non-mixed only based on citizenship.

Despite being the largest immigrant ethnic group, Albanians are not estimated in the Muslim immigrant populations in Greece because attempts to estimate their religious affiliation would involve massive statistical errors (Baldwin-Edwards, 2008). Most scholars writing on 'new Islam' in Greece (Anagnostou and Gropas, 2010; Baldwin-Edwards, 2008; Hatziprokopiou, 2016; Triandafyllidou, 2010; Trubeta, 2003; Tsitselikis, 2012b) agree that Albanians exhibit limited religiosity and, even those who are of Muslim background are largely non-practicing (Evergeti et al., 2014). In addition, a significant proportion of Albanian migrants have ethnic Greek roots and Christian Orthodox background (Hatziprokopiou, 2016). A large percentage of the Albanian citizens living in Greece are nominal Muslims but are not practicing or claiming accommodation for religious beliefs or practices (Triandafyllidou and Kokkali, 2010). Most of the Albanians self-identify as atheists or non-religious or are portrayed as willing to convert to Christianity in the hope of obtaining employment opportunities, integration within Greek society and material benefits (Hatziprokopiou, 2006; Kokkali, 2013; 2015).

The estimates based on proxy measures show that for the period 2004-2012, there have been 481 marriages between Greek men and potentially Muslim women or 1.65% of the total of mixed marriages between Greek men and female third country nationals. Almost half of the estimated interreligious marriages are between Greek men and Turkish women (170 marriages in the period 2004-2012 or 35% of the total of interreligious mixed marriages). Other

nationalities represent small numbers of marriages mainly with women from Egypt and Morocco.



Source: Own calculations based on EL.STAT database (personal communication, 2011; 2013)

The respective total amount of marriages between Greek women and potentially Muslim men is 1.459 or 13% out of 11.110 mixed marriages between Greek women and men of any other nationality. Marriages of Greek women to Turkish migrants represent 22% of the total interreligious marriages; marriages to Pakistani migrants represent 25%, while marriages with Egyptians stand at 14%, with Syrians at 11% and with Iraqis at 9%. Mixed marriages of Greek women with Pakistani migrants have risen sharply from 6 marriages in 2004 to 70 marriages in 2012, reaching a peak of 183 marriages in 2011. When the estimates of mixed marriages are informed according to the religious affiliation of the conjugal partners, women are 8 times more likely than men to marry out of their religious group. Statistics reflect the restricted independent female migration from Arabic countries, as well as gender roles and expectations in Islam and the social sanctions posed on religious exogamy of Muslim women.

Due to the lack of data on religious affiliations of conjugal partners, it is not possible to estimate mixed marriages between minority Muslims and Christian Greek citizens. Mixed marriages between Greek Christians and minority Muslims are merged into the official data records in the total of marriages in Greece. Similarly, it is not possible to estimate mixed marriages between Greek converts to Islam married to Muslim migrants of diverse national background. We cannot estimate the scale of the phenomenon of religious conversion with the purpose of getting married to a spouse with different religion. There is no official data on

conversion rates from Islam to Christianity and from Christianity to Islam, while data collection on Greeks who converted to Islam in prayer halls and unofficial Mosques that have been established informally in greater metropolitan Athens is rendered exceptionally difficult and problematic. Tsitselikis (2004; 2012b) mentions that, according to unofficial information from the Mufti office in Komotini, 45 Greek Christian citizens had converted to Islam in the period 1990-2004. The Orthodox Church of Greece does not maintain any official record of conversions to Christianity (Petronoti, 2007:18). These restrictions pose insurmountable obstacles on reliable estimates of interreligious marriages in Greece.

'Old' and 'New' Islam in Greece

Freedom of religious choices exists within a context of restraints and opportunities as shaped by the rules of the religions and the specific societal and historical context. Religious freedom remains quite limited in Greece (Mavrogordatos, 2003). Greece did not follow the path of secularisation like most of the other European nation-states, where other forms of cultural and civic nationalism replaced religion as a basis for national solidarity (Chrysoloras, 2004). The Eastern Orthodox Church of Greece is not legally separate from the Greek state and Christian orthodox religion is constitutionally recognised as 'the prevailing religion in Greece'. Orthodox Christianity and the Greek nation are inseparably linked concepts in Greek conscience and Orthodoxy still continues to function as a line of demarcation between Greeks and non-Greeks. The Christian Orthodox religion forms an essential component of Greek national identity, alongside language and ancestry (Mavrogordatos, 2003). Structure and agency are always in tension and while the balance differs, no one should be seen as entirely bound by structural constraints (Williams, 2010). The option of conversion from Christianity to Islam gives in itself evidence of a process of religious pluralisation as a precondition of religious choice within Greek society.

The contemporary Islamic presence in Greece consists of the indigenous Muslim minorities of Western Thrace in the North Eastern part of Greece, often referred to as the 'Old' Islam, and 'New' Islam, which resulted from recent migrations to Greece and bears similarities to Muslim communities in Western Europe (Antoniou, 2003; Evergeti et al., 2014; Tsitelikis, 2012b). In addition to the Muslim immigrants and indigenous minority Muslims, we should recognise the emergence of neo-Muslims, the Christian-born Greeks who converted to Islam. Although Muslims are the second largest religious group in Greece, they are deprived of religious rights, such as their

right to perform rituals in official places of worship, mosques and cemeteries. Athens has notoriously become the only European Union capital where no official Mosque operates. Islamic religious sites, especially in Athens and Thessaloniki, are hidden and operate in a semi-illegal mode under the banner "cultural centres" (Dermentzopoulos et al., 2009). "The Mosque that wasn't there" (Antoniou, 2010), i.e. the lack of an official Mosque in Athens (Antoniou, 2003; Hatziprokopiou and Evergeti, 2014; Skoulariki, 2010; Triandafyllidou and Gropas, 2009) and the infringement of religious rights in Greece have attracted much attention by European institutions and international human rights organisations. The construction of the mosque is not only a matter of necessity for a 'proper' place to pray, or a venue large enough to cover the religious needs of the Muslim populations in the Greek capital, but it is, rather, a symbolic claim to the acceptance of Muslim presence in the Greek capital and the public recognition of Islamic religious identities (Hatziprokopiou and Evergeti, 2014). Thus, the construction of a mosque becomes an issue of democratic pluralism and citizenship rights (Hatziprokopiou and Evergeti, 2014).

In the specific Greek historical context, Islam is identified with Greek – Turkish bilateral relations and past Ottoman occupation. 'Mixing' Christians and Muslims in an interpersonal intimate relationship defeats the 'unmixing' of Christian and Muslim people imposed by the compulsory population exchange in 1923. Greek - Turkish marriages bring together people, families and groups who were not supposed to mix. Bruce Clark, in his best-seller book, *Twice a Stranger* (2007:11), describes how the mass populations exchange forged Modern Greece and Turkey.

> *"It was determined Greece would be an almost entirely Orthodox Christian country, while in Turkey, the overwhelming majority of citizens would be Muslim. Anybody who lived in the 'wrong' place, from the viewpoint of religion, would be deported across the Aegean to start a new life in the 'right' country."*

Almost half a million Turks and other Muslims in Western Thrace were exempted from the obligatory population exchange between Greece and Turkey in 1923. The Treaty of Lausanne associated the native Thracian Muslims with the "Minority Question" and imposed on the different Muslim groups that resided in Thrace an institutional relation with the Turkish state (Trubeta, 2003). Taking into consideration that every attempt to nominate the groups is a literal convention, the minority as a whole will be conventionally referred to as "Muslim minorities", following the religious criterion of exchange of the Greek-Turkish population as defined by the Treaty of Lausanne (1923).

Minority Muslims are important in terms of Greek - Turkish relations due to their particular legacy of Ottoman institutions (Oktem, 2010). The Islamic law system is applied in the officially recognised Muslim minorities of Western Thrace in Greece. In the context of protection of minority rights, rooted in the legacy of the Ottoman Empire and endorsed by bilateral agreements between Greece and Turkey and the Treaty of Lausanne (1923), the minority Muslims still have access to Sharia Courts in Western Thrace (Oktem, 2010). The three Muftis of Thrace have the right to act as judges applying the Islamic Sacred Law within the administrative area of their jurisdiction on family law issues, concerning marriages and divorces, inheritance, alimony and custody and their decisions are ratified by the Greek courts (Tsitselikis, 2012a). The muftis who are appointed by the Greek state as civil servants have no jurisdiction outside the area of Western Thrace.

Three different ethnic groups are linked together in a process of minoritisation based on their common Islamic religion: ethnic Turks, Pomaks, and "Turko-Gyfti" or "Katsiveli" (Greek names for Muslim Roma). An attempt to define the "ethnic groups" that form the Muslim minorities of Thrace is bound to fall into generalisations of rather perplexing and contradicting hetero- and self-definitions. Each one of these ethnic groups is characterised by inherent differentiations regarding their population composition, the origin and language, religiosity, economic activity, intricate social stratification and distinctive spatial distribution. The categorisations 'Turk', 'Pomak' and 'Roma/Gypsy' may be used as a convention so long as identities and related terminology are negotiable and subject to self-identifications (Tsitselikis, 2012b). Ethnicisation might be initiated by the dominant society but is essentially a multifaceted process and involves not only the perception of a group by others but also a process of "self-ethnicisation", a reactionary self-definition by the affected group itself (Trubeta, 2003).

Any estimate of Muslim minorities' populations derives from data collected on Greek citizens' religious affiliation and mother tongue in the 1951 National Census (Tsitselikis, 2012a). Using the "Yearbook of Muslims in Europe" (Tsitselikis, 2012a) as a source, I am going to cite some indicative numbers in order to place the Muslim minority populations in perspective and in proportion to their size and dynamics. The Muslim minorities amount to 105,000 members (Tsitselikis, 2012a). It is estimated that more than 120,000 migrated to Turkey and to Germany during the massive migration waves in the 1960s and 1970s (Mavrommatis, 2005; Tsitselikis, 2012a). Almost 15,000 members have emigrated from Western Thrace to Athens encouraged by economic incentives offered to them by the Greek state in the 1980s (Antoniou, 2005;

Avramopoulou and Karakatsanis, 2002; Mavrommatis, 2005; Petraki, 1997). Minority Muslims represent a small population proportionally to the total Greek population (105,000 out of 11,000,000 or 0,95% of the total Greek population), but are concentrated in the specific geographic region in Western Thrace (105,000 out of 362,038 or 29% of the Western Thrace population according to the 2001 National Census).

- Minority Muslims of Turkish ethnic origin are the dominant ethnic group within the Muslim minorities and amount to 80,000. They dominate the economic activities, the religious and cultural practices and are represented in the Greek Parliament.

- Pomaks are an indigenous population of Greater Thrace, including Bulgaria and Turkey. Around 20,000 Pomaks reside within the Greek territory; they speak a Bulgarian dialect as maternal language and express a Pomak ethnic identity often along with a Turkish identity (Tsitselikis, 2012a).

- Muslim Roma amount up to 5,000 and are monolingual Turkish speakers (Tsitselikis, 2012a). Muslim Roma originate from Ottoman Turkish Romanlar populations, who were exempted from the 1923 population exchange between Greece and Turkey (Imam and Tsakiridi, 2003). Muslim Roma are not excluded from the collective entity of the minorities; they form a part of it, however, placed in a lower social position (Zaimakis and Kallinakaki, 2004).

The economic underdevelopment, the systematic repression and the responding withdrawal of the minority members from the local society extenuated the gradual social polarisation that ultimately consolidated the segregation of the Muslim minority populations from dominant Greek society. The restrictive policies that included militarisation of the frontier zone, refusals of bank loans, land contracts and construction permits, restrictions of professional licenses and work in the public sector and restrictions on driving licenses lasted until the 1990s and resulted in the formation of a widely underprivileged population that had few possibilities to participate equally in the society as a whole (Trubeta, 2003). The form of minoritisation, stigmatisation and marginalisation that Muslim Roma, in particular, suffer (Evergeti, 2011), is connected to a complex form of exclusion from crucial sectors of society (e.g. health system, education), structural perpetuation of extreme poverty, poor housing and residential segregation in ghetto-like settlements at the margins of Thracian towns and villages (Trubeta, 2003). Phenomena of social malaise, such as psychosocial problems, early school leaving, alcoholism, delinquency, drug abuse and domestic violence have been documented in Muslim

Roma populations (Imam and Tsakiridi, 2003; Trubeta, 2001).

Sunnism is the most popular branch of Islam followed by immigrants from African, Arab and Asian countries. Shi'ism is far less widespread, while Alevism is found mostly among Turks, Kurdish and Thracian Muslims. Minority Muslims are mainly followers of Sunni Islam and to a quite limited extent of Bektashism (also, adopting the term used in Turkey, referred to as Alevism), a syncretistic and heterodox brotherhood related to Sufi orders (Tsitselikis, 2012b). Religiosity seems to be in decline as modernisation of overall society and the influence of Kemalist ideas constituted factors that gradually downplayed the role of religion, which was of overwhelming importance for the communities until the early 1960s (Tsitselikis, 2012b). However, the religious practices of the Muslim minority communities in Western Thrace are still the main component of communal ethics (Zaimakis and Kallinakaki, 2004). All Islamic religious festivals (i.e. Seker Bayram, Kurban Bayram and the initiation of children in Islam called 'Hatem') are celebrated and led by the official and elected Muftis (Tsitselikis, 2012a). Traditions, religious practices, such as fasting during Ramadan and the attendance of Friday prayer are powerful unifying elements, especially for the communities of Pomaks and minority Turks (Zaimakis and Kallinakaki, 2004).

Despite the minority being seen as Muslim, some members of the minority are secularised, even atheist (Tsitselikis, 2012b). Muslim Roma have less adherence to religious rules and practices comparatively to Pomaks and minority Turks (Trubeta, 2001; Zaimakis and Kallinakaki, 2004) and are considered as willing to convert to any religion if material benefits are offered to them (Trubeta, 2003). The Christian baptism of Muslim Roma represents their social and cultural development and integration into the dominant society (Trubeta, 2001). As an embodiment of their social exclusion and response to prejudice, minority Muslims who reside in Western Thrace or in Athens often adopt Christian names in order to hide their religious and ethnic identity, while they address each other with their real Muslim names when they socialise among themselves (Antoniou, 2005; Avramopoulou and Karakatsanis, 2002; Trubeta, 2001).

Almost a century after the Treaty of Lausanne (1923), social contacts between Greek Christians and minority Muslims remain restricted. According to Huseyinoglu (2010:5-6),

> *"Despite the rapprochement in Turkish - Greek relations in the last decade and different attempts for interreligious and intercultural dialogue across the Aegean, ethnic, religious, and cultural boundaries still shape relations between Muslim*

> *Turks and Christian Greeks in Western Thrace. In spite of the Turco - Greek rapprochement following the 'earthquake' diplomacy of the late 1990s, members of both communities have continued to behave with the hidden boundaries in mind, while socialising with one another. Despite growing levels of interaction in recent years, mixed marriages continue to be major social taboo. Even the younger generations of the region, encompassing those who had not experienced the heydays of discrimination in the pre-1990s are still segregated along ethno-religious lines. The cafés in Komotini, for instance, are frequented by Greeks and Turks alike on Saturday evenings. It is rare, however, to see Greeks and Turks sitting together at the same table"*.

Similarly, contacts between Muslim immigrants and Muslim minorities in Western Thrace are very limited and mainly in Athens (Antoniou, 2003; Tsitselikis, 2012a). Furthermore, Muslim members of the Parliament elected in Western Thrace have shown virtually no interest in supporting the religious organisation of Muslim immigrant populations in Athens (Antoniou, 2003). Such low level of interest might also be welcomed by the Greek state that would not want to see the institutions of Western Thrace being revitalised and strengthened by the immigrant Muslim communities of Athens (Huseyinoglu, 2010). The distinctiveness of these Muslim populations is marked by their loyalty towards different home states and different understandings and perceptions of their religious identity (Oktem, 2010). Religious classical languages, such as classical Arabic and Turkish, maintain boundaries between the host culture and the minority culture, and among ethnic and religious communities or groups (Gogonas, 2012). Greek converts to Islam, who could play an important role in the processes of negotiation and intercultural communication between Muslim groups and the Greek government, are very few (Antoniou, 2003). This fragmentation, alongside their overall marginalisation in Greek society, has made their voice rather weak in the Greek public sphere (Triandafyllidou and Gropas, 2009).

The phenomenon of different and competing versions of Islam does not apply in Western Thrace, as the highly homogenised and shared common understanding of what constitutes Islam remains heavily influenced by contemporary Turkish Islam and has kept Western Thracians away from the influence of Arab Muslim networks (Huseyinoglu, 2010). Interreligious dialogue and attempts to discuss the application of Shari'a or other subjects are very weak and entrapped in Greek - Turkish politics (Tsitselikis, 2012a). Intra-Muslim dynamics

are not obvious but they are all united by concerns about practical problems, regarding the lack of worship places and cemeteries (Tsitselikis, 2012a).

Religion is not the only link between Muslim immigrants and minority Muslims, who share common socioeconomic characteristics and face similar problems and social exclusion. The settlement of Muslim immigrants and minority Muslims in Athens has led to conditions already experienced in other European capitals: illiteracy, insufficient knowledge of Greek language, economic marginality, political neglect, weak individual rights, social exclusion, emergence of racist reactions from the local majority population, Islamophobia and xenophobia (Antoniou, 2005).

Interplay between 'New' Islam and the Greek 'marriage market'

Some of the traditional characteristics of marriage are more pronounced among certain socioeconomic groups than others (Giddens, 1992). Alongside the emergence of modern patterns of family types in Greek society with evidence of increase in cohabitation, divorce, single-parent families and out of wedlock birth rates (Presvelou, 2001), traditional wedding customs, such as dowry, bride acquisition by purchase or abduction and elopement persist on the margins of Greek society and especially, in the religious and cultural system of the Muslim minority communities (Imam and Tsakiridi, 2003; Mekos, 2001; Pavli-Korre and Sideri, 1990; Theocharidis, 1995; Varvounis, 1997). The amendment of the Greek Civil Law in 1982 that introduced the civil wedding and eliminated the obstacles to interethnic and interreligious marriages allowed for the increase of mixed marriages in Greece. However, there are certain limitations to the conclusions we can draw from the demographic trends in marriage patterns, such as declining marriage rates, rise of cohabitation and increase in mixed marriages.

The presence of large groups of men and women migrating alone for work purposes in Southern European countries is a factor that favours the development of transnational families (Zontini, 2004). There is a pattern of increasing polarisation of immigration to Greece by gendered nationality (Baldwin-Edwards and Apostolatou, 2009). After 2001, several nationalities showed an increase in males (Syria, Egypt, Romania, Albania) and some nationalities with an existing female bias showed an increase in females (the Philippines, Ukraine and Russia) (Baldwin-Edwards and Apostolatou, 2009). For Southern Europe (Albania) there is a predominance of males; for Eastern Europe (Bulgaria, Ukraine, Moldova) a

predominance of females; South-Central Asia (Pakistan, India, Bangladesh) is predominantly male; and Western Asia looks balanced but actually consists of males from Syria and females from Georgia and Armenia (Baldwin-Edwards and Apostolatou, 2009). Islamic nationalities are predominantly male; Slavic ones predominantly female (Baldwin-Edwards, 2014).

A common characteristic of immigrants from Asian countries (Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and Afghanistan) is the almost exclusive male presence in Greece (Broersma and Lazarescu, 2009; Dimitriadi, 2013; Maroukis, 2008). As a consequence of independent male migration from Asian countries, the percentage of men to women is disproportionate in Muslim immigrant communities. In the case of Indian and Pakistani, the proportion of men to women is at 18:1 among residents and 37.5:1 among the migrant labour force (Tonchev, 2007). In 2009, out of 7,035 Pakistani legal migrants in Greece, only 432 were women (Dermentzopoulos et al., 2009). The low labour force participation rate for Pakistani women suggests that any female migration would most likely be linked to family purposes (Maroufof, 2015). Such male-dominated migration patterns can be explained by the 'culture of migration' in Pakistan and Bangladesh and by the pragmatic obstacles posed by the Greek state to any attempts for family reunification (Broersma and Lazarescu, 2009).

The opportunities for finding a partner of the same group are also linked to the size of the community, as well as to the proportion of potential opposite-sex partners within the group (Lanzieri, 2012b). The majority of Muslim migrants are at productive and reproductive age. Over half of the Egyptians and Syrians are aged between 30 and 44, 80% between 25 and 44 and half of Iraqis are between 20 and 29 (Antoniou, 2003). The married population among immigrants residing in Greece is estimated at 48%, unmarried population constitutes the second largest group with 44%, while the percentages of divorced, separated and widowed migrants are low (Triandafyllidou et al., 2009). The presence of sizeable numbers of unmarried labour migrants in the male migrant population and the gender disproportion in the female migrant groups are confronted with a skewed marriage market with insufficient potential female partners in the migrant population (Cavounidis, 2003; Lievens, 1999).

Asian immigrants in Greece face insurmountable impediments for family reunification. Bureaucratic delays and complications in the family reunification procedure constitute a strategy used by the authorities of both the host and the sending country to prevent further influxes (Dermentzopoulos et al., 2009). Almost all married Indians and 78% of married Pakistani are in Greece without their families, while the family reunification percentages of other immigrant categories are 16% for Albanians, 14% for Europeans and 8% for African

immigrants (Tonchev, 2007). The administrative obstacles and low prospects of family reunification hinder marriage migration, lower the chances of male Muslim immigrants marrying co-ethnics from their country of origin and give rise to the creation of polygamous relationships in Greece and Pakistan (Dermentzopoulos et al., 2009; Yousef, 2013).

The educational level of immigrants varies mostly according to their nationality. As a result of the low educational level of Asian immigrants and their difficulty in learning the Greek language, the position they occupy in the Greek labour market is characterised by low payment and low specialisation in employment (Tonchev, 2007). Muslim immigrants perform working-class or low-status jobs and are generally considered as cheap and tax-free labour (Antoniou, 2003; Iosifides, 1997). The majority of irregular Muslim immigrants perform hard manual tasks in specific economic sectors (e.g. construction, manufacturing, trade, catering and to a lesser extent agriculture and transport/storage), often through informal arrangements and thus, without social security and with very modest rewards (Evergeti et al., 2014). On the contrary, there has been substantial student migration from the Arab countries and a large number of Arabs have entered middle-class professions such as medicine and engineering; they are upwardly mobile and are considered assimilated in Greek society (Majid, 1991; Shawa, 2005). Enforcement of preferential legal treatment (law 2341/1995) allowed for higher university entries of high school graduates from the Muslim minority. Higher participation of minority Muslims in Greek universities increases contact opportunities with students from the dominant society. Assuming that highly-educated members of ethnic or racial minority and migrant communities tend to marry exogamously, we would expect increased levels of intermarriage of highly-educated Arab professionals and minority Muslims, while the prospects of intermarriage of Asian migrants are lower.

Legal status has been the major issue of concern for the majority of immigrants in Greece (Evergeti and Hatziprokopiou, forthcoming). There are no realistic, coherent and operational immigration policies that could guarantee long-term residence to immigrants or recognition of their rights in Greek society (Hatziprokopiou and Evergeti, 2014). With the exception of Muslim migrants, who have been settled in Greece since the 1970s, especially Egyptians and Pakistanis who have obtained Greek citizenship, the majority of Muslim migrants possess long-term residence permits. Many of those, who arrived between the late 1990s and mid-2000s are subject to a renewable short-term stay permit; however maintaining their status has become a problem in the context of the recent economic crisis, since renewal depends on formal employment (Evergeti et al. 2014). Other Muslim immigrants have been granted

refugee status, asylum or temporary status as asylum-seekers. The vast majority of recent Muslim inflows remain undocumented (Evergeti et al. 2014; Maroukis, 2008; 2012).

Despite overarching demographic and socioeconomic patterns in Muslim migrant populations in Greece, the brief overview presented above points to the heterogeneity of the immigrant Muslim populations, which comprise different national and ethnic groups, diverse migration histories, migratory plans and routes, varying legal statuses and socioeconomic conditions and point to diverse, mobile and highly fluctuating populations, whose material circumstances (legal status, employment, social security, etc.) are also constantly shifting (Hatziprokopiou, 2016). Similarly, there is no single pattern of religious organisation and practice among Muslim migrants in Greece, since they belong to different Islamic traditions, practice their faith at varying degrees and engage in different modes of collective mobilisation in their struggles for rights and recognition (Hatziprokopiou, 2016). The absence of religious Muslim authorities and the lack of an official and legal mosque in Greece isolate Muslim migrants, pose difficulties in their integration into the host society and raise obstacles in their religious expression. These differentiations among Muslim migrant populations and the segregation of informal prayer sites along the lines of nationality, locality and religious denomination have allowed little space for the various nationality-based and religious organisations to unite in a single formal body of collective representation and add more to the difficulties in understanding Muslim migrant populations as forming a 'Muslim community' (Antoniou, 2003; Hatziprokopiou, 2016; Hatziprokopiou and Evergeti, 2014).

A very limited number of studies have so far focused on the importance of religion in the immigrants' daily lives (Evergeti and Hatziprokopiou, forthcoming; Hatziprokopiou and Evergeti, 2014; Papantoniou, 2009). Religious feasts become points of reference for the communities (Hatziprokopiou and Evergeti, 2014). In the absence of a central mosque, Muslims hold Eid-ul Fitr and Eid-al-Adha, which concentrate large numbers of believers in large venues such as stadiums, after obtaining the relevant permit from local municipal and police authorities (Skoulariki, 2010). The Muslim Association of Greece, as well as the Pakistani community "Unity" and other organisations, have organised various such celebrations over the last few years, which attracted large public attention (Evergeti et al., 2014). In general, the immigrants' attachment to transnational religious networks allows for the maintenance of ties with places of origin and provides a source of identity and a space for organising informal prayer sites in Athens (Leghari, 2009; Salvanou, 2009).

The highly skewed gender composition of various nationalities present in Greece, the disproportionate percentage of men to women in Muslim immigrant communities, the high presence of unmarried male immigrant populations, the absence of co-religionist Muslim women among the immigrant population, and detachment of independent male immigrants from their social and family networks with the subsequent lack of social pressure, act as "push factors" for Muslim male immigrants to find a partner among the female population of the host society. Muslim migration is predominantly portrayed in Greece as male migration with a surplus (Hatzopoulos and Kambouri, 2010). This surplus in combination with the scarce presence of Muslim migrant women in Greece will be counterbalanced either through marriage migration and family reunification or intermarriage with the local female population. Asian and African immigrants had for a long time considered Greece as a transit point on their way to other Western European countries (Dimitriadi, 2013; Papadopoulou, 2004). The boost in the Greek economy in the mid-1990s and the early 2000s led first-generation Asian and African immigrants to prolong their stay in the country. Meanwhile the process of family reunification and mixed marriages turned immigration into permanent residence and led to the emergence of a second generation of immigrants (Kassimeris and Samouris, 2012:176).

Greece has been hit by an unprecedented economic and humanitarian crisis, the effects of which are still difficult to measure and appreciate (Kirtsoglou, 2013). The eruption of the Greek economic crisis in 2008-2010 and the subsequent measures of severe austerity dramatically altered the conditions throughout the country and unavoidably deeply impacted the migration landscape (Triandafyllidou et al., 2013). While family purposes and formal employment were the two main reasons for the award of valid resident permits, formal employment declined reflecting the impact of the economic crisis on the employment rates of migrants. Based on the Labour Force Survey Data for the last trimester of 2012, the unemployment of third country nationals is estimated at 38% (Triandafyllidou et al., 2013). The decrease in valid residence permits indicates either an outflow of migrants from Greece or rather a strong trend towards de-legalisation and irregularity due to their inability to renew their stay permits when unemployed (Triandafyllidou et al., 2013).

Settlement in the country is either consciously not pursued or is seen as difficult, due to migration policies, absence of legalisation measures, regular police operations, a fragmented asylum system, racist violence, social exclusion and economic crisis with increasing unemployment rates (Dimitriadi, 2013). Difficulties in residence and integration led even those who had received the much sought after refugee status or residency permit to consider

migrating to another EU member state (Dimitriadi, 2013). Asian migrants are discriminated against in Greek society, among numerous grievances about the attitude of Greek public authorities, notably of the police, whereas the prospects of social integration of Asian migrants in Greece appear to be extremely limited (Tonchev, 2007). Being highly 'visible' in physical and cultural terms makes their social integration a truly daunting task.

Petronoti (2007) has argued that the investigation of religious, cultural and social practices of mixed couples, as well as their integration in Greek society, is increasingly interesting in an era when although Greece is a host country of increasing numbers of immigrants from Asia, Africa or Eastern Europe, ethnocentric voices raise claims to the cultural and religious uniformity of the nation and successive governments subject religious minorities to rigid prohibitions. Having introduced in this chapter the research context on mixed Christian – Muslim families in Greece, and the historical, political, social and legal context in which this research is contained and having discussed why Christian – Muslim mixed marriages in Greece are sociologically significant, I will review the literature on mixed families and intermarriage in the next chapter and contextualise this research in the academic literature on family-related migration and family transnationalism.

Chapter 2

Mixed families, intermarriage and family-related migration

The aim of this chapter is to contextualise the doctoral research on mixed Christian – Muslim couples in Greece with the academic literature on mixed marriages, family-related migration and family transnationalism. I discuss a range of terms and concepts that describe intermarriage, mixed marriages and marriages that cross borders and I attempt to highlight the complications in meanings and definitions. Following Kofman (2004), who points out that the categories in the field of family and migration are characterised by fluidity and interaction, I discuss several definitions, typologies and trajectories to family-related migration and I summarise a wide range of studies on cross border marriages in regional terms and from a methodological point of view. Then, I analyse the social marital norms with emphasis on how these norms are applied in Greek society, and especially the Muslim minority communities of Western Thrace. Bourdieu's notion of habitus (1984) and theory of matrimonial strategies as universally written into the system of strategies of social reproduction (Bourdieu, 1977; 1990) are brought into the theoretical discussion. However, the discussion on matrimonial norms and strategies would be incomplete without acknowledging the choice, agency, emotions, preferences and opportunities of the individual actors.

Mixed marriages feature inequalities, legal asymmetries and hidden hierarchies, as well as cultural, ethnic and religious differences. These inequalities are embedded in historical, political and socially constructed differentiations that occur interpersonally, between groups, nationally and transnationally. Gender and religion, with emphasis on gender roles in Islam, are examined in relation to marriage and migration. While family migration has often been configured as female, migration from predominantly Muslim countries, as noted in chapter 1, is male-dominated and tends to alter the global patterns of cross-border marriage migration and to affect gendered power relations. The religious practices of Muslim migrants and Muslim minorities in Greece are highly pertinent to the purpose of this study. I conclude the chapter by presenting an emerging research field on how faith, culture and ethnicity inform parenting of children in mixed families.

Overview of research on intermarriage

A range of terms and interrelated concepts have proliferated in sociological literature to describe intermarriage. The complexity of description of a wide range of marital practices in the field of migration, integration and transnationalism is complicated by a lack of consensus in the interchangeable and sometimes, promiscuous use of terms each with its own associations and conceptual nuances (Charsley, 2012). The link between migration, assimilation, and mixed relationships has long been studied, although in the earlier American sociological tradition the term "mixed" was used in a negative sense to emphasise the deviant character of exogamy (Gordon, 1964; Kennedy, 1944; Landis, 1949; Merton, 1941). In the American sociological literature, intermarriage was treated as an instrument of ethnic integration or as a marker of assimilation (Alba, 2005; Alba and Nee, 1997; Gordon, 1964; Hirschman, 1983; Lieberson and Waters, 1988). Though in the United States, "mixed marriage" refers mainly to interracial or interfaith couples, the French espoused the American sociological tradition and called cross-national couples in France "mixed", and not "bi-national" or "bi-cultural" (Collet, 2012).

Cross-border marriage is proposed as a generic term that can include marriages made both between and within communities (Constable, 2005; Piper and Roces, 2003) and transnational marriages or transnational families (Beck-Gernsheim, 2007; Bryceson and Vuorela, 2002; Evergeti and Zontini, 2006; Shaw and Charsley, 2006). Scott and Cartledge (2009) have come up with the term "mixed nationality relationship migrants" to describe migrants who have committed to a life outside their home country because of the presence of a foreign partner. A host of adjectives and prefixes have been used to define the ethnic, cultural and religious characteristics of mixed marriages (Rodríguez-García, 2006; Collet, 2012; 2015), such as 'cross-cultural' (Breger and Hill, 1998), 'intercultural' or intergroup marriages (Cottrell, 1990). However, the use of qualifiers can prove problematic in that mixed families are rarely only interethnic, intercultural or interreligious, while social and gender characteristics should not be omitted. Collet (2015) argues that the use of the term "conjugal mixedness" is more appropriate to refer to mixed families, especially because of its undefined quality and indeterminate nature. The term "mixed" captures the diversity, encompasses the range of ethnic, racial and faith differences and allows for defining the specificities of the 'mixedness' for each individual case (Edwards et al., 2010). Nevertheless, the terms "mixed" and "intermarriage" have been criticised by Williams (2010:10) for being culturally essentialist and privileging differences, such as those relating to culture or religion, over similarities, perhaps

in class, social group or interests being unhelpful in determining what a couple have in common.

Williams (2010, 2012) defines 'cross-border marriages' as marriages in which at least one of the partners is a migrant, that is, marriages where one partner lacks formal citizenship status in their country of residence. The definition of the term 'cross-border marriage' according to the citizenship status of the marriage partners is problematic because it conceals marriages between members of minority and majority ethnic populations or naturalised third country nationals who acquired citizenship status in their country of residence. Citizenship acquisition does not hold a determining relevance for the inferior minority social status derived from discrimination, social exclusion and limited access to social, economic and power resources within the given society (Trubeta, 2003). An approach to citizenship as a set of juridical, political, economic and cultural practices (Turner, 1993), as opposed to legalistic and static notions of citizenship, enables a view that accepts that citizenship is a dynamic process of inclusion and exclusion taking place across a range of social relations (Erel, 2003). Same citizenship may conceal cultural (or religious) differences, whereas different citizenship may hide cultural similarities (Collet, 2012).

Definitions, trajectories and typologies of family-related migration are problematic because family formation is a messy and often nonlinear process (Flowerdew and Al-Hamad, 2004). Several authors have attempted to develop categorisations of marriages involving migration, but the resulting schemes vary, depending on the particular context and focus of the research (Charsley, 2012). Waldis and Byron (2006) identify four trajectories: temporary migration transformed into permanent migration by marriage; intermarriage with majority ethnic populations enhancing the integration of permanent migrants; bi-national mate selection initiating migration; and intermarriage between members of the second generation without migration. Marriage can be either a secondary effect of the reason for going abroad when it involves permanent residents or citizens bringing in a partner they have met while abroad for work, study or travel for tourism from the increasing presence of transient and long-term migrants in a society (Kofman, 2004) or it can be the cause of migration (Piper and Roces, 2003). One must make a distinction between those who “met and moved” and those who “moved and met” (Scott and Cartledge, 2009). Charsley (2012) attempts to define the following widely employed terms in the fields of marriage and migration: Family-formation or marriage migration in which a migrant spouse joins a permanent resident; Family reunification or reunion, where a migrant later brings a spouse or other dependent family member to join

them; Family migration when family moves together; and dependent or tied migration in which a couple or family migrate together but one member is the primary migrant and the other follows/accompanies them.

In regional terms, research on marriage and migration has been very prolific on East and South East Asia and its diasporas (Constable, 2003; 2005; Palriwala and Uberoi, 2008; Piper and Roces, 2003; Shaw and Charsley, 2006). There is an emerging field of research on African and Middle East transnational marriages (Al-Sharmani, 2006; Hussein and Manthorpe, 2007; Pasura, 2008; Roer-Strier and Ben Ezra, 2006; Salih, 2001; Wagner, 2014). In Europe, marriage migration research has addressed both intra-European marriages (de Valk and Díez Medrano, 2014; Favell, 2011; Favell and Recchi, 2011; Gaspar, 2008; 2009; 2012; Recchi, 2015) and intermarriage between European citizens and non-citizen migrants or members of ethnic and religious minorities (In Great Britain: Jones, 1982; 1984; Muttarak and Heath, 2010; Song, 2009; 2015. In France: Filhon and Varro, 2005; Collet, 2012; 2015; Collet and Santelli, 2012; Kringelbach, 2013; Neyrand and M'sili, 1998; Safi, 2010; Safi and Rogers, 2008; Santelli and Collet, 2012; Varro, 2003. In Sweden: Dribe and Lundh, 2011; Niedomysl et al., 2010. In Belgium: Koelet and de Valk, 2014; Lievens, 1999; Timmerman et al., 2003. In Germany: González-Ferrer, 2006; Beck-Gernsheim, 2007; 2011. In Spain: Rodríguez-García, 2006; Gaspar, 2008; 2009; 2012. In the Netherlands: Kalmijn et al., 2005; Kalmijn and van Tubergen, 2007; Van Tubergen and Maas, 2007). In the Greek literature, there is a small body of research on mixed families in Greece that focused on intra-European or Western families (Isaakyan and Triandafyllidou, 2014; Lauth Bacas, 2002; Milliarini, 1998), the legal status of female marriage migrants in Greece (Salimbeni, 2004), intercultural families between Greeks and Eritrean migrants (Petronoti, 1998), transnational families in Greece, Italy, Bulgaria and Turkey (Nazarska and Hadjiniak, 2010) and Greek-Turkish marriage of political and historical interest (Petronoti, 2006; 2007; Petronoti and Papagaroufali, 2006).

Research on intermarriage features many quantitative studies that use multivariate analysis on large-scale surveys, censuses and population data sets to test hypotheses over the propensity of migrant and native, ethnic, racial and religious groups to intermarry and to test macro-sociological theories of social cohesion and intergroup relations in the USA (Alba and Golden, 1986; Blau et al., 1984; Qian, 2001; Qian and Lichter, 2007), in Australia (Khoo, 2011) and to measure intermarriage and immigrant assimilation in Western Europe (Coleman, 1994; Kalmijn, 1998; Lucassen and Laarman, 2009). Quantitative multivariate analysis methods have also been employed to test the effect of individual determinants and contextual factors on

interfaith marriage (Glenn, 1982; Kalmijn, 1991; Lehrer, 1998; O'Leary, 2001; Sherkat, 2004). The effect of the "education" variable on the probability of interethnic and interfaith marriage has attracted much attention but has yielded ambiguous results. Kalmijn (1991) observes a shift from ethnic and religious heterogamy towards educational homogamy. Furtado and Theodoropoulos (2011) have found that depending on the availability of same-ethnicity potential spouses with a similar level of education, highly-educated people may be better able to adapt to different cultures making them more likely to marry outside of their ethnicity (higher cultural adaptability and assortative matching effects), while other studies have contested this finding (Lehrer, 1998; O'Leary and Finnäs, 2002).

From an economic perspective, the concepts of household production and human capital have also been applied in order to analyse issues, such as the division of labour in mixed families, the employability and economic situation of intermarried migrants and denominational mobility in interfaith marriages (Dribe and Lundh, 2010; Iannaccone, 1990; Lehrer, 1996; Nottmeyer, 2010). Quantitative positivist approaches to intermarriage have been criticised for failing to contextualise the data collected or redress gender-linked biases in research design. On the contrary, the empirical orientation of ethnography encourages incorporation of newly discovered relevant variables and possesses a suppleness much more difficult to accomplish in quantitative data collection (Mahler and Pessar, 2006). In the following sections, I will focus mostly on qualitative and ethnographic research on mixed marriages and intermarriage in Greece and in Western Europe.

Social norms of marriage

The social marital norms of homogamy, endogamy and hypergamy are analysed here with emphasis on how these norms are applied in Greek society, and especially the Muslim minority communities of Western Thrace. Matrimonial strategies are universally written into the system of social reproduction (Bourdieu, 1990:71). Pierre Bourdieu (1990) sees in the historically determined "game" of matrimonial exchanges the real principle behind strategies – the system of dispositions and practical sense as a feel for the game – a mastery acquired by experience of the game and one which works outside conscious control and discourse.

> *"Matrimonial strategies are the product, not of obedience to a rule but of a feel for the game which leads people to 'choose' the best match possible given the*

> *game they have at their disposal and the skill with which they are capable of playing; the explicit rule of the game - for instance, prohibitions or preferences in kinship or laws of succession - defines the value of the playing cards"* (Bourdieu, 1990:64).

Matrimonial strategies reflect patterns of social interaction that are the result of preference, opportunity and cultural resources (Kalmijn, 1998). Santelli and Collet (2012) use the term "pre-conjugal socialisation" to address that individuals are constrained in their conjugal choices both by a set of subjective experiences and by their objective social conditions. Contact opportunities are shaped by several structural arrangements, such as the demographic composition of the population, the regional distribution of groups, the residential environment and the functional settings, e.g. school, workplace and places of encounter with friends and peers (Kalmijn, 1998; Santelli and Collet, 2012).

People tend to marry within their ethnic / racial group (endogamy) or to marry close to their socioeconomic status (homogamy) (Kalmijn, 1998). The notion of habitus, as society written into the biological individual, is indispensable for the definition of homogamy.

> *"There are of course all these social techniques that aim at limiting the field of possible matches, by a sort of protectionism but the surest guarantor of homogamy and, thereby, of social reproduction, is the spontaneous affinity (experienced as a feeling of friendly warmth) which brings together the agents endowed with dispositions or tastes that are similar, and thus produced from similar social conditions and conditionings"* (Bourdieu, 1990:71).

Cross-border marriage can be motivated between people who share common interests, experiences or common socioeconomic attributes in terms of class and education. Emphasising distinctions based on ethnicity and culture obscures other factors that connect people and are important for the definition of homogamy, such as class, profession, common interests, ideologies, political activism and less tangible connections such as mutual attraction. The notions of 'boundary', 'ethnic group' and 'Other' do not leave room for the aesthetic spark, the romantic and wholly reckless anti-strategy of love, ignoring the sometimes celebratory aspects of interethnic marriage (Kohn, 1998). King (2002:100) urges us not to underestimate the libidinal factor in "transnational intimacy" or "love migration".

There has been little critical consideration of the primary social signifier that individuals identify with. A shift of emphasis from one social signifier to another may lead us to re-

consider a marriage seen as ethnically or culturally exogamous as a homogamous marriage according to its socioeconomic status or education characteristics. Intra-European family formations are a good example of homogamous families that share similar lifestyles, values and attitudes and enjoy free movement and social mobility. Intra-European families, even though are ethnically exogamous family formations *sensu stricto*, do not construct themselves as migrants, but rather see themselves as cosmopolitan, highly qualified free movers in the European space (Gaspar, 2009). They experience a hyphenated, denationalised European existence that materialises the ideal of European citizenship as the freedom of movement and residence for European Union citizens (Favell and Recchi, 2011; Recchi, 2015).

Endogamy, mainly an internalised characteristic of closed ethnic and religious groups, contributes to the maintenance of the population equilibrium because it restricts the potential loss of members through intermarriage with members of other ethnic groups that could undermine their composition and promotes the internal cohesion of the group through ensuring kinship ties (Liapis, 2006). Exogamy interrupts the traditional forms of social organisation by removing the woman from the family network and thus severing kinship ties. One of the basic endogamic rules of traditional communities is that marriages are not supposed to take place either with close relatives or with foreigners (Levi-Strauss, 1967). Endogamic rules are unevenly enforced in Greek society according to gender, nationality and religion. Women are often assumed to be the 'gendered ethnic centre' of their group which revolves around in-group ideologies of ethnic femininity, women's domestic reproductive roles and sexual morality of 'chastity' (Breger and Hill, 1998:15; Yuval-Davis, 1997). While men who marry-out are more tolerated than women, endogamic rules tend to be more forcefully applied with regard to religious criteria with such prohibitions being especially rigid when it comes to Muslims (Petronoti, 2006:559). Many migrants in mixed relationships believe that Greek society is to a considerable extent unfriendly or even hostile and especially, rejects mixed marriages with Muslims (Nazarska and Hajdinjak, 2010).

Minority status and the experience of racism and social exclusion, can promote a defensiveness that leads to the re-assertion of community boundaries and the imposition of social controls that are often gendered (Williams, 2010). In the Muslim minority communities of Western Thrace, ethnic and religious endogamy is a moral principle. The few mixed marriages that occur between members of the Muslim minority communities and members of the dominant society in Thrace are seen as an exception to the rule of ethnic and religious endogamy (Evergeti, 2006; Huseyinoglu, 2010; Trubeta, 2001). Ethnic and religious exogamy is

prevented under threats of ostracism outside the area of Thrace, disinheritance, suspension of family ties and exclusion from the Muslim communities (Trubeta, 2001; Zaimakis and Kaprani, 2005). Mixed marriages between Greek Christians and Muslim Roma take place mostly in the Western Thrace region and are usually between disadvantaged Greeks from Orthodox backgrounds and Muslims from the very marginalised and excluded minority populations (Adrian Marsh, personal communication). As a result of their spatial ghettoisation and their social exclusion, Christian Greeks who choose to settle in Roma settlements are usually marginalised people with a compromised past and delinquent activity (Mavrommatis, 2005:102).

Furthermore, endogamy was not implemented either among Muslims as a whole or within any of the subgroups (i.e. among all Pomaks or among all Roma) but only in single villages or settlements according to hierarchical norms (Trubeta, 2003). Even though minority Turks attempt to incorporate Muslim Roma into the Turkish minority for numerical purposes, they firmly deny consolidating any marital ties with Muslim Roma located in settlements (Mavrommatis, 2005). Mixed marriages between minority Turks and Muslim Roma are rare (Liapis, 2006; Mavrommatis, 2005), while mixed marriages between minority Turks and Pomaks are now a given (Trubeta, 2001:101). Tsibiridou (1985-86), who conducted ethnographic research in a traditional mountainous Pomak village, attested that the "powerful" families had developed closed and elementary marital exchanges within strictly endogamous Pomak communities. The virilocal / patrilocal residence, the nuclear housing arrangements, the cooperation between the consanguineous kinship and the linear inheritance rule testify to the importance of the kinship relations within the social structure of the relatively self-sufficient Pomak communities (Trubeta, 2001; Tsibiridou, 1985-86). In the restrictive system of spatial endogamy that was developed in traditional Pomak communities, the 'village' was the physical and symbolic boundary and the selection of the place of settlement made part of the marital strategy (Tsibiridou, 1985-86).

Matrimonial strategies of racial and vocational endogamy were devised to foster the internal cohesion of the kinship affinities of Muslim Roma (Pavli-Korre and Sideri, 1990; Trubeta, 2001; Liapis, 2006). Marital choices are still guided by the racial endogamous principle for the Muslim Roma of Thrace (Liapis, 2006). Unlike the restrictive spatial endogamy of traditional Pomak communities, Muslim Roma practice relative racial endogamy and controlled spatial exogamy among Roma groups that share social and cultural affinities. Marital exchanges do not take place between the established Turkish-speaking Roma and Roma who have recently

abandoned their nomadic lifestyle which stands for a kind of intra-Roma racism (Liapis, 2006). These marriages are perceived as racially exogamous because of the different evolutionary stage in social integration, degree of religiosity, difference of maternal language (Turkish / Romany) and other traditional and cultural characteristics.

The functionality and importance of the social rule of endogamy in the Muslim communities of Western Thrace were challenged by the transformation of traditional professions due to technological developments in the twentieth century socioeconomic order and rural-to-urban and international migration, as it hindered rather than enhanced economic activity (Liapis, 2006). The social re-organisation of ethnic communities and other restructuring processes reflect underlying transformations in the value system of the Muslim communities that are evidenced, for instance in the increase of communication among young people, visibility of young women in the Muslim communities and greater degree of personal freedom to choose one's partner (Avdikos, 2000; Zaimakis and Kaprani, 2005). While traditions and religious beliefs still determine social interactions, a modern public discourse that challenges the dominant perceptions and gestates changes in gender relations, recreational activities, education and sartorial preferences, is articulated at a slow but progressively accelerating pace in the Muslim communities of Western Thrace (Zaimakis and Kaprani, 2005).

The principle of hypergamy requires that marriage induces symbolic capital to one of the families (Vernier, 1981). Matrimonial strategies that underlie the notion of hypergamy are aimed at increasing economic capital as well as cultural, social and symbolic capital that can be converted into material profits (Bourdieu, 1977; 1986). For example, European intra-marriages are more likely to show higher levels of social acceptance and social integration than those between an EU citizen and a third country national as a result of the advantages offered to a European citizen: the right of residence, geographical mobility, civil rights, legally guaranteed freedom from discrimination, and easier access to employment in comparison to other groups of migrants (Gaspar, 2009). Symbolic social status is only attached to Western European women (Lauth Bacas, 2002) as intra-European marriages are considered hypergamous.

Factoring emotions and inequalities in cross-border marriages

Cross-border marriages are often judged against the unattainable imaginings of 'modern',

ideal, 'pure' relationships as described by Anthony Giddens (1992) in the “Transformation of Intimacy” (Williams, 2010; 2012). The overemphasis in late modern Western societies on “liquid love” (Bauman, 2003), “intimate citizenship” (Plummer, 2003) or “citizenship of choice” (Plummer, 2005), “clash of sexual civilisations” (Inglehart and Norris, 2003b), “reinvention of the family” (Beck-Gernsheim, 2002), “the normal chaos of love” (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 1995) or “distant love” (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2014), indicates the modern ideal of love relationships. Cross-border marriages are scrutinised by policy-makers and immigration officials on the assumption that they are predominantly strategic in nature and contracted more for the purpose of obtaining long-term settlement and permission to work than to establish an enduring, intimate partnership (Williams, 2012). Moreover, intra-European marriages or marriages between other groups that are considered culturally compatible are rarely subjected to the same sort of scrutiny as marriages between racial groups (Williams, 2012).

The gendered imaginings of potential partners from distant (or not-so-distant) lands map the Other who is constructed as sexually desirable and possesses attributes desired in a spouse on the imaginative 'cartographies of desire' (Constanble, 2005:7). The role of fantasy and imagination in choosing a spouse is clearly important for men and women, both of whom may project desirable characteristics onto their foreign partners, while they may not have the right knowledge about their destination countries and thus, they may be unprepared for what they find on arrival (Miliarini, 1997; Williams, 2012). Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim (2007), drawing on Arjun Appadurai's analysis (1996), concludes that “geographical distance, rather than posing a barrier, is a prerequisite for such a union. The marriage comes about because the partners do not live in the same country” (Beck-Gernsheim, 2007:277). Issakyan and Triandafyllidou (2014), analysing how the banal nationalism (Billig, 1995) and expat nationalism of Anglophone marriage-migrants interacts with family dynamics and socialisation processes in Mediterranean societies, describe how the impact of romantic lifestyle narrative reassures Anglophone marriage migrants to expect the 'Mediterranean Prince Charming', yet always remaining on the 'American mission'. The exoticising of certain aspects of Mediterranean culture, the tourist-like romantic quest in combination with the negative Othering processes sustained by the Anglophone expatriate nationalism in Southern Europe has adverse effects on the Anglophone marriage-migrants' socioeconomic integration and their general wellbeing, leading to a process of fragile or broken integration (Isaakyan and Triandafyllidou, 2014).

A study of emotions can enable new approaches and insights into the experience of migration

and can unravel the social, economic, political and experiential complexities of human mobility and belonging (Ryan, 2008; Svašek, 2010). Louise Ryan (2008) navigates the migratory journey of Irish nurses to Britain and uses a chronological life-course approach to explore migration as an ongoing emotional journey. She draws attention to the emotional culture that required Irish female migrants to engage with emotion management and repress their emotions of loneliness, anger or disappointment in order to conform to the ideal of the successful migrant. Similarly, Faier (2007, cited in Williams, 2010) argues that migrant women married to Japanese men adopted a very public rhetoric of love to make their less than satisfactory and stigmatised marriages socially acceptable.

New lifestyle choices are embedded in deep moral conflicts that occur interpersonally, between groups, nationally and internationally and are implicated in the organisation of inequalities (Plummer, 2005). Cultural, ethnic and racial differences only become significant when they are based on historical and socially constructed differentiations (Collet, 2012). Collet (2015) argues that it is not the encounter between two traditions or two cultural entities that is at stake, but conjugal choices reflecting inequality, asymmetry of their legal status and hidden hierarchies: one is a national, the other is a foreigner; one belongs to the majority, the other to a minority. The formal, citizenship or residency status will impact qualitatively different on the marriage migrants' cross-border marriage experience than the marriage experience of partners who may have different migratory or cultural backgrounds but who share a secure status in their country of residence (Williams, 2012:24). The conjugal choice of an "outsider" impacts also on the majority partner who is looked upon with suspicion and disapproval (Collet, 2015). Citizen women may become racialized in that their legal and social position is determined by the nationality and ethnicity of their spouses intersecting with their gender (Kofman, 2004). Similarly, studies on mixed couples in Spain (Rodríguez-García et al., forthcoming as cited in Rodríguez-García, 2015:15) also found that both the Spanish-born and foreign-born members of the intermarried couples suffered social discrimination from both society and their own families regarding the crossing of ethno-cultural borders; this rejection was based on negative stereotypes and prejudices linked to the partner's origin, phenotype (physical traits and appearance), or ethno-cultural characteristics, such as religion, especially Islam.

Collet (2015) has defined three ideal-typical "intercultural modes of conjugal adjustment", corresponding to different ways of integrating inequalities in mixed couples. The first mode of conjugal adjustment consists in the minority partner adopting the dominant or majority

culture, to the detriment of the minority partner's cultural references. In this mode of adjustment, the cultural transmission to the children (choice of first names and religious orientation) is determined by the cultural references of the majority partner. At the other extreme, the second mode of conjugal adjustment entails that the majority partner adheres to the culture of the minority partner. Religious conversion may symbolically accompany the reorientation and bring substantial changes in their social life, such as exclusive socialisation within the minority community, selective friendship networks and transmission of the minority cultural references to the children. The third mode is the quest for a balanced relationship that combines various cultural elements of both in a reciprocal intercultural exchange. Communication is the principal characteristic of these couples and nothing is taken for granted: lifestyles, language use, rituals, education, holidays, every domain of private and public life are discussed and negotiated (Collet, 2012). They refuse to reproduce the major pre-established, cultural features, but they elaborate on new, reciprocal, social, gender and cultural exchanges and invent "new family lifestyles" (Collet, 2012).

The historical and political context defines who is considered an insider and who is considered an outsider and subsequently impacts on the marriage patterns between different groups and the levels of social acceptance or rejection of intercultural marriages (Breger and Hill, 1998). Cross-border marriages can take different political significance for each of the religious, ethnic and cultural groups involved, especially in times of hostility as in the case of Western women married to Palestinian men (Roer-Strier and Ben Ezra, 2006) or Arab - Jewish couples (Abu-Rayya, 2000). Abu-Rayya (2000), as cited in Roer Strier and Ben Ezra (2006), analysed four coping mechanisms that Arab - Jewish couples use to deal with the effect of political conflict on mixed families: identification with the oppressed, greater unity between the couple, avoidance of accusation and political amnesia. Similar coping mechanisms are found in the study of Petronoti (2006) on the "primordial foes", the Greek-Turkish couples living in Athens. Petronoti and Papagaroufali (2006) focused on the multifaceted ways in which historical memory, ethnicity and gender roles intersect in Greek - Turkish marriages by unravelling the controversial ways in which memory and difference are perceived and remodelled in the domestic sphere. Although crossing ethnic and historical boundaries does not transform dominant ideas, these mixed marriages allow their participants to maintain flexible distinctions and construct meaningful national representations and commonalities between themselves (Petronoti and Papagaroufali, 2006).

The problems of intimacies, choices, and inequalities exist in profoundly different forms

amongst different groups in the same society, as well as across different parts of the world (Plummer, 2005:79). Defining a marital act as transgressive, problematic or as against the social norms necessarily relies on an agreed definition of what the social norms are, hence researchers ought to be cautious about their position in determining the norm of those they study (Breger and Hill, 1998; Williams, 2010).

Gender and religion in marriage migration

Family-related migration is recognised as one of the largest global migration streams (Kofman, 2004; Kofman and Meetoo, 2008). Research studies show that motivations for marrying across borders can be very variable with economic, social, cultural and political reasons weighing significantly (Williams, 2010). Men and women migrate through different channels taking advantage of gender-specific labour markets and are present in different concentrations in different migratory flows (Piper, 2006). Eleonore Kofman (1999:287) has described the 'multiple personal and familial strategies' for marrying across borders,

> *"Women have ambitions and strategies that cannot be reduced to the simple division between economic and personal autonomy, on the one hand, and family migration on the other. One strategy does not preclude other meanings, intentions and strategies... marriage can be the means of gaining independence and participating in a different society, even when the change may occur within a seemingly traditional framework."*

At a global level, migrants who travel for marriage most often are female but it is not always clear whether women are the initiators of migration, whether they are obliged to or see little alternative to migrate, or whether they are active agents in the whole process of migration from the genesis of the idea to negotiating access to a country of settlement (Williams, 2010:213). Whilst family migration has often been configured as an unintended consequence of male economic mobility, as dependent wife and children arrive to join the male breadwinner (Kofman, 2004), the percentage of men is much more even in terms of family formation (Kofman, 2013). In some communities, equal numbers of men cross borders as spouses and the presumption of women as the archetypal marriage migrant may reflect cultural assumptions more than reality (Williams, 2010). Significant numbers of men and women become 'transformed' or re-categorised into marriage migrants *after* they have

already migrated – and men may be the majority in this category (Williams, 2010).

Female marriage migration preoccupies the majority of studies (Charsley, 2012), although some research does exist on the non-insubstantial flows of husbands migrating to meet wives and on the outcomes of cross-border marriage on men (Ahmad, 2008; Ballard, 2004; Charsley, 2005; Charsley and Liversage, 2015; Charsley and Wray, 2015; Gallo, 2006). Gender often gets conflated with the study of women in isolation rather than the migratory processes that produce and reflect social and power relations between and among men and women (Ahmad, 2008:155). Ryan and Webster (2008:4) argue that the preoccupation with gendering female migration not only excludes men from such studies but also overlooks the complex interactions between men and women, within and between migrant groups and indigenous groups and the impact that these have for both masculine and feminine identities. Mahler and Pessar (2001; 2006), extending the notion of "gendered geographies of power" have argued that gender-sensitive studies investigating male perspectives are still rare but gender in its broadest sense should clearly be factored into analyses of all migration and migratory movements (Pessar and Mahler, 2003). Current research on gender and migration has expanded discussion on male masculities, sexuality and mobilities (Ahmad, 2011; Batnitzky et al., 2008; Batnitzky et al., 2009; Christou, 2016; Wray, 2015).

Migration from predominantly Muslim countries, as noted in chapter 1, remains profoundly male-dominated. A few studies on Moroccan migration to Southern Europe (Italy, Spain), have indicated that women are a minority in the migration flow, but part of a growing movement of Moroccan women who have started getting access to migration, including women in relationships who become the 'pioneers' of family migration and thus defy the stereotype of Moroccan women as merely 'followers' (Zontini, 2004; Salih, 2001). Moroccan female trajectories are positioned in a stereotypical discourse about women's proper role in the migrant network (Santero, 2008). The stories of women who leave Morocco as single migrants are embedded within the social identity of their families, while the presence of male kin in the host country often makes women's migration more socially acceptable since it allows a conceptualisation of women's migration as a reunion with family members rather than as an individual adventure (Salih, 2001). Wagner and Peters (2014) discuss how Moroccan Muslim women resident in Europe negotiate access to leisure outside the home, in both Europe and Morocco, demonstrating that they practice mobilities framed by safety, risk and responsibility combined with individual volition to be participants in public spaces. Single women and divorcees take advantage of contacts and information on the availability of female jobs and

are attracted by the possibility to expand their capabilities and enjoy their newly-acquired independence away from kin pressures (Santero, 2008; Zontini, 2004). Similarly, Erman (1997) has argued that women play active roles in family strategies around migration and sometimes, initiate rural-to-urban migration in Turkey.

Debates on intimate citizenship are much less developed in Arab countries and South East Asia, where the economic conditions of life, poverty, warfare or totalitarian political regimes and rigid traditions deprive intimate relationships from any sense of agency and choice over intimate life (Plummer, 2005). According to Islamic jurisprudence, marriage has a distinct patriarchal basis within rigid patrilineal family systems that prevent Muslims not only from marrying non-Muslims, but also from marrying Muslims of different ethnic backgrounds (Lucassen and Laarman, 2009; Yamani, 1998). Arab families exercise greater cultural constraints on the marital choices of their daughters than of their sons (Hussein and Manthorpe, 2007; Kulczycki and Lobo, 2002; Roer-Strier and Ben Ezra, 2006). However, Muslim societies are neither uniquely nor monolithically low on tolerance towards sexual orientation and gender equality (Inglehart and Norris, 2003a) and marriage patterns are far from homogeneous across the Arab region. According to Hussein and Manthorpe (2007), most Arab countries are currently going through some sort of 'nuptial transition' from one pattern of marriage to another, with different countries being at different stages of such transition. New emerging forms of non-conventional temporary or undocumented marriages in the Arab world are reinforcing young couples' achievement of autonomy in their marital choices, albeit without always declaring such choices and actions to their families (Hussein and Manthorpe, 2007).

Research on cross-border marriage has been religion-blind and ignored the change in the patterns of cross-border marriage migration when the religion of marriage migrants is taken into consideration. Only a few studies have focused on marriages between Muslim men and Western women (Khan, 1998; Roer-Strier and Ben Ezra, 2006) or intra-Muslim cross-cultural marriages (Charsley, 2005; 2007; Yamani, 1998). Yamani (1998) presents a case study of a cross-cultural marriage within Islam, in which a Saudi Arabian woman and a Pakistani man managed to overcome the impediment of prohibition of marriage between a Saudi woman and non-Saudi citizen without special dispensation and consolidate a marital union establishing a common bond and overriding identity by emphasising a sense of shared religion and religious unity for their children. It is more likely that a woman of high status would venture out of her culture to marry than a woman of lower social status, partly due to

exposure to the outside world and degree of confidence achieved through the privileges of wealth and education that enable her to realise that a cross-cultural union is within permitted religious boundaries (Yamani, 1998). Despite the propagated ideals of Islamic unity, cross-cultural marriage in Islam remains ambivalent because, even though is within permitted religious boundaries, Islam does not successfully cut across cultural boundaries; socioeconomic criteria, social taboos, patriarchal norms and prohibitive policies predominate instead (Yamani, 1998).

Charsley (2005; 2007) analyses the risks of marriage in a transnational context and the complex "geography of status" of "unhappy Muslim husbands", who marry for a passport in transnational Muslim communities. Transnational marriage is subject to the risk of the exploitation of marriage as a migration opportunity by a husband who intends to leave his wife once the right to remain in the country has been obtained (Werbner, 2002). Through forming family units in their country of migration, male migrants find themselves in dependent positions in relation to their citizen, female spouse necessarily upsetting the gendered power balance in many relationships (Williams, 2010). A Muslim husband's migration reverses the tradition of the virilocal settlement of the married couple disrupting the conventional configuration of kinship after marriage (Charsley, 2005). Muslim migrant men experience a complex set of gendered power relations within the household that create new domestic power relationships and challenge traditional patriarchal authority (Ahmad, 2008; Charsley, 2005). Although there is little research available on the social consequences of male marriage migration, there is evidence that men struggle to adapt to changes in social settings and to their enforced dependence on their wives (Ballard, 2004; Charsley, 2005; Gallo, 2006).

Transnational families and translocal communities

Glick Schiller and Fouron (1999), have defined transnational migration as a pattern of migration in which migrants, although they settle and establish ongoing social relations in a new state, maintain ongoing social connections within the polity from which they originated and literally live their lives across international borders. Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004:1009) expand the concept of transnationalism beyond the direct experience of migration into domains of interaction where individuals who do not move themselves maintain social relations across borders through various forms of communication. Faist (2000:194-8) has described three transnational social spaces: kinship groups bound by ties of reciprocity;

transnational circuits that are the outcome of instrumental activities; and transnational communities whose solidarity is expressed in some sort of collective identity. According to Peggy Levitt (2001b:10), transnational communities are those situations in which,

> *"It is not merely that numerous individuals live their lives within a social formation that crosses borders; it is that a significant number from a given place of origin and settlement share this experience collectively with one another, transforming the way they think of themselves as a group".*

The provenance of most everyday migrant transnationalism is within families (Vertovec, 2009). Marriage may provide an opportunity for physical or symbolic repositioning in the "transnational social field" (Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004) or in the "transnational moral economy" (Velayutham and Wise, 2005; Wise and Velayutham, 2008). Marriage migration and the formation of a transnational family has to be understood as a dynamic process based on acts of negotiation and balancing of different claims and obligations within and across borders. Lauth Bacas' study of Greek-German families in Athens demonstrates how cross-border marriages link kin groups of different national origin to a new social unit and create affiliations and obligations across different nation states (Lauth Bacas, 2000). This kind of cross-border relationship was made possible by increasing interconnectedness between European states, globalisation of the markets, the modernisation of transport and communication systems together with a growing tourist industry in Greece and the individualisation processes in Western European societies (Lauth Bacas, 2000). Greek and German partners in mixed marriages developed new strategies such as back-and-forth-travelling or renting a room in the old apartment as a safety anchor to cope with the dispersed family network and to organise interaction with affine and consanguine family members in the new and old environment (Lauth Bacas, 2000). Love functioned as a buffer to what would otherwise be a series of cultural shocks and together with the progressive familiarisation due to the continued travelling back and forth, enabled the marriage migrants to become well acquainted with the different language, but also different cultural values and social norms defining the newly established Greek-German family union (Lauth Bacas, 2000).

Bourdieu's theory of practice (1977) and, in particular, the notion of "habitus" (Bourdieu, 1984) has been used for the study of migrants' incorporation in transnational context and transnational social fields (Erel, 2010; Nowicka, 2015; Scott and Cartledge, 2009). Nowicka (2015) argues that although Bourdieu's theory needs to be adapted to researching transnational migrants and social fields, it still allows us to address the transformation of

migrants' dispositions, attitudes, worldviews and practices within complex systems of power relations. Erel (2010) criticising the 'rucksack approaches' that do not adequately take account of the struggles and the differential ways in which cultural practices are articulated with forms of femininity, ethnicity and class to create complex hierarchies of distinction, urges us to consider the meanings the actors give to cultural practices in order to understand how cultural capital signifies distinction and produces recognisable social identities in the local, national and transnational context.

Scott and Cartledge (2009), applying the notion of "habitus" (Bourdieu, 1984) to the transnational family *milieus,* have observed that mixed-nationality relationship migrants, i.e. migrants living with a foreign partner in the partner's home country, have a range of gendered qualities and resources that, within the facilitating context of the transnational family, enable them to assimilate to a much greater degree than other migrant types. This particular form of transnationalism opens up the host society to the migrant partner rather than creating any kind of placeless internationally orientated transnationalism (Scott and Cartledge, 2009). Life partners belonging to a different culture or ethnic group, are often very successful cultural mentors (Nowicka, 2015). Several studies have proved that relationships with the host population in Greece can become a promising source of social capital (Hatziprokopiou, 2006; Hatzopoulos and Kambouri, 2010). Based on a case study of Kurdish migrants in Greece, Papadopoulou (2004) argues that the Kurdish migrants who had ties with Greeks had more stable jobs and felt more integrated in Greece, and that Kurdish men married to Greek women even managed to overcome class boundaries.

Following the definition of Michael P. Smith (2001), "translocal" means "local to local". Transnational communities are translocality-based structures of cultural production and reproduction with connections maintained through economic and technological links (Smith, 2001). Translocal is a transnational relationship between local sites (Baldassar, 2001; Grillo, 2007). Translocality focuses on the socio-spatial processes by which social actors and their networks forge translocal connections and create the linkages between and across places (Smith, 2011). In the ethnographic study of a Muslim Roma settlement in Western Thrace, Avdikos (2000) sees the localilty as the unifying element of the expression of the collective cultural existence of the Muslim Roma residents. The "railway tracks" designate the physical and symbolic boundaries to their collectivity in their *mahalah* (i.e. the neighbourhood in Turkish). Avdikos (2000) describes how the Muslim Roma residents of the Avantos settlement, while being based in their "mahalah", use the regular transportation networks to go shopping

in the adjacent urban centres both in Greece and in Turkey to buy fashionable Islamic clothes and CDs with popular Turkish music. The main communication networks are: First, the communication networks with other Muslims who live in the cities of Western Thrace as well as communication and exchanges with Christian Greeks. Second, regular transport connections with Eastern (Turkish) Thrace and especially, Istanbul (Zaimakis and Kaprani, 2005). Third, Turkish media that broadcast exclusively for the Muslim minority in Western Thrace, reproduce the Turkish national political discourse and introduce new cultural trends. Turkish TV programmes transmit the cultural messages of a more secularised Muslim society and become tools for the development of Turkified Islam and growing role of Turkey in the Muslim minorities (Avramopoulou and Karakatsanis, 2002; Huseyinoglu, 2010; Zaimakis and Kallinakaki, 2004). Transnational networks between the local Muslim communities of Western Thrace and surrounding societies both in Greece and Turkey contribute to the cultural exchanges between the local/traditional community and the global/secular.

Intermarriage and religious practices

Mixed marriages bear a strong relationship to religious beliefs and conversion (Kose, 1996; Mansson McGinty, 2006). Religious intensification is often associated with matrimonial strategies and religious mobility seems to occur in order to obtain religiously homogamous marriages (Sandomirsky and Wilson, 1990; Sherkat, 2004). Religious mobility with the purpose of achieving homogamy alters the "social space" over which transition takes place in terms of social status and theological position (Lehrer, 1998; Musick and Wilson, 1995). Marital realignments will tend to be more efficient when the less religious spouse converts to the religion of the more religious spouse (Iannaccone, 1990). Even though heterogamous marriages bear characteristics that make them more unstable and more likely to be dissolved, marriages that have become homogamous through conversion are equally stable as homogamous marriages because conversion is perceived as a long term investment that happens in case there is evidence of a strong and stable relationship (Kalmijn et al., 2005).

Rambo (1993:13-14) has systematised the range and varying characteristics of religious practices during the transformative conversion process into the following types: apostasy or defection, intensification, affiliation, institutional transition and traditional transition. Conversion is a process of religious change that takes place in a dynamic force field of people, events, ideologies, institutions, expectations, and orientations (Rambo, 1993; 2003). The

affectional motif of conversion that emphasises the importance of the development of positive, interpersonal affective ties that can bridge the gap between religious group members and potential converts (Lofland and Stark, 1965) is important for the analysis of religious conversion in the context of mixed relationships.

There is a growing literature on small-scale conversion to Islam in Western Europe and USA (Allievi and Dassetto, 1999; Dutton, 1999; Kose, 1996; Mansson McGinty, 2006; Roald, 2001; Van Nieuwkerk, 2006). According to Allievi (2006), conversions to Islam that are the result of marriage, generally have little to do with the search for spirituality and have no great impact on the lives of individuals, couples and their offspring. When ethnic and cultural exogamy is in some way "compensated for" by religious endogamy, the convert is "pushed" towards conversion through social and psychological pressure (Allievi, 2006:123). Marriage can prove to be a profound dimension of the conversion process as a platform of dialogue between the inner formation of self and the recognition of the transformed self by the partner (Mansson McGinty, 2006).

The reconceptualisation of religion from a gender perspective has opened up diverse fields of enquiry into the themes of religion and migration that have emphasised the pivotal role of religious practices in the formation of migrant subjectivities and gender in migrant communities and in host societies (Pepicelli, 2010:18). It has only been since the beginning of the 21st century that scholars have started investigating the religiosity of immigrant women outside the countries of their origin and the diverse practices of religiosity that transform the everyday life of European migrants and citizens in the public and the private sphere, shifting their focus to Islamic communities (Pepicelli, 2010:19). The "Gender, Migration and Intercultural Interactions in the Mediterranean and South-East Europe" (Ge.M.IC.) project addressed the different meanings migrants attach to religion and faith not only through their own beliefs and words, but also through their actual everyday practices (i.e. praying, dressing, cooking, eating, gestures and attitudes towards other faiths) in Greece, Italy, Bulgaria and Turkey (Hatzopoulos and Kambouri, 2010; Kambouri and Zavos, 2011; Nazarska and Hajdinjak, 2010; Pepicelli, 2010).

Immigrants' country of origin is more important than the country of destination for understanding immigrants' religious affiliation, but the effect of the country of destination is more important for understanding the religious attendance, practices and religiosity of immigrants (Van Tubergen, 2006). Marriage as part of the immigrants' life cycle is associated with increased religiosity (Van Tubergen, 2006). The religious practices of migrants in Greece

are dealt with as strategies for their political and social integration. The conversion to Christianity of Turkish refugees married with Greek women is seen as a political act that serves as an informal, albeit effective, strategy of integration into the family and the nation, resolving bureaucratic issues by ensuring residence permit and engineering at the individual level what asylum policies in Greece cannot solve (Petronoti, 2007:20). The adaptive strategy of many Bulgarian and Albanian, Muslim or atheist migrants, especially women, to go through Christian orthodox marriages, to baptise their children or to adopt Greek Christian names for themselves is not always the product of religious conversion (Hatzopoulos and Kambouri, 2010). These are social practices that make up part of survival tactics and strategies of adjustment to the host country's culture and help them overcome the obstacles of social acceptance and forge intercultural links with Greeks (van Boeschoten, 2006).

Social pressure is exerted, especially by Greek Christian employers or colleagues, friends and neighbours, who usually volunteer to baptise Muslim or atheist migrants and their children and offer social and economic benefits in exchange (Hatziprokopiou, 2003; Lauth Bacas, 2000; Miliarini, 1997; Pepicelli, 2010). It reflects a willingness on the part of the Greek "cultural mentors" to offer Albanians the opportunity to acculturate by adopting the dominant religious dogma (Hatziprokopiou, 2003). This strategy of tactical baptism is closely connected to another widespread adaptive strategy of Albanian immigrants in Greece, especially those of Muslim affiliation, which is to change their names to Greek ones (Hatziprokopiou, 2003). The mass phenomenon of "baptising" migrants with Greek names mostly by their employers who vehemently refuse to call them by their original names displays the ease with which the Greek dominant group switches between reducing or even fixating on their ethnic identity and at the same time denying one of the most central characteristics of Western identity: one's name (Alvaro et al., 2008:109).

Traditional wedding customs, such as dowry, bride acquisition by purchase or abduction and elopement persist at the margins of Greek society and the religious and cultural system of Muslim minority communities (Imam and Tsakiridi, 2003; Mekos, 2001; Pavli-Korre and Sideri, 1990; Theocharides, 1995; Varvounis, 1997). Elopement is an enacted ceremonial ritual with defined roles in a scene of predefined ending that makes part of the local cultural system (Avdikos, 2000; Liapis, 2006). The importance of these marital customs can be perceived only within the specific context of social conventions that are intertwined with the social institution of marriage in these communities, the socioeconomic status and the symbolic capital of the families (Tsibiridou, 1985-86; Liapis, 2006). Marital practices and gender roles are articulated

together with the cultural norms and value systems of the local Muslim communities.

Parenting "mixed" children

Issues of religious and cultural reproduction naturally raise questions concerning the acquisition, modification or discarding of religious practices among the subsequent generations born and raised in post-migration settings. The question of how faith, culture and ethnicity relate to one another is highly pertinent in the context of mixed-faith families, especially in cases where parents are from different ethnic and faith backgrounds (Arweck and Nesbitt, 2010a). Children in 'mixed faith' families appear to be a strategic population in which to examine the acquisition, negotiation and implementation of multiple cultural competences (Arweck and Nesbitt, 2010a; Crippen and Brew, 2007; Mahler and Pessar, 2006).

There have been a few studies in Great Britain on the influence of religious beliefs and practices on parenting (Horwath et al., 2008); 'mothering through Islam', that explored how mothers of diverse Muslim backgrounds in London use 'conservative' interpretations of Islamic beliefs and practices to underpin their parenting strategies (Ryan and Vacchelli, 2013); parenting 'mixed' children (Caballero et al., 2008; Edwards et al., 2010); intersection of faith and ethnicity in mixed-faith families (Arweck and Nesbitt, 2010a; 2010b; 2010c); and religious education of young people from mixed-faith families (Arweck and Nesbitt, 2011). Additionally, there are a few quantitative studies on the role of marriage and parental religiosity in the development of ethnic, religious and cultural traits of children (Bisin and Verdier, 2000; Ecklund and Lee, 2011) and the effect of parents' religious heterogamy on children's wellbeing (Petts and Knoester, 2007).

Portes and Rumbaut (2006) have suggested that there are certain benefits associated with selective acculturation when second generation migrant children continue observing the faith of their parents. Common faith shared by parents and children contributes to a shared universe of meanings across generations, more open channels of communication between the two generations and a system of beliefs and norms antithetical to downward assimilation (Portes and Rumbaut, 2006:316). Everyday religious and cultural practices, religious nurture at home or religious education at school and participation at formal places of worship, all shape the identities and activities of the so-called second and third generations (Jackson and Nesbitt, 1993; Vertovec, 2004).

Children with dual and multiple heritages have grown up to negotiate their own identities and relationships with their countries of heritage (Williams, 2012). Notwithstanding that at the micro level, children of mixed marriages are less likely to identify with a single social, ethnic or religious group (Kalmijn, 1998), those of mixed descent are starting to highlight rather than suppress their dual or multiple identities (Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). Maxwell (1998) notes that mixed children's choices of identity are seldom "hard and fast" forever, but they can change within the life-cycle progression and the social, political and economic contexts they live in. Jackson and Nesbitt's (1993, as cited in Arweck and Nesbitt, 2010a) notion of "multiple cultural competence" indicates the skill with which young people negotiate their identities within the different social settings in their lives. Based on her study of the dual character of Norwegian Pakistani children's identity, Østberg (2000) extended this into the notion of "integrated plural identities" which imply the retention of plurality, diversity, instability, fluidity and contextuality without the individual's losing a sense of Self (Østberg, 2000). Le Gall and Meintel (2015), drawing on interviews with intermarried couples in Quebec, Canada, discuss these parents' "identity projects" for their children that consist in the parents' undertaking of transmitting identity, values, and culture to their children through strategies such as choice of name and surname and transmission of the minority parent's languages. They argue that the parents aim to enrich their children's lives and choices by offering them the possibility of holding multiple affiliations and equipping them with the maximum amount of "cultural resources" possible.

Kalmijn (2015) tests the thesis that intermarriage fosters the integration of immigrants by studying the children of intermarriage. Using secondary school–based questionnaire data from England, Germany, the Netherlands, and Sweden, he compares the children of mixed marriages to second-generation immigrants and to children of native origins. Three dimensions of integration are measured: social integration (contacts with natives), cultural integration (religiosity and family values), and economic integration (school achievement tests). Kalmijn (2015) finds that the outcomes for the children of mixed origins are in between the outcomes of immigrants and natives. In some respects, mixed children are exactly halfway, confirming a model of additive effects of parental origins. In other cases, mixed children are closer to immigrants than to natives, pointing to a model of stigmatisation and ethnic retentionism.

Researchers on mixed or transnational families in Greece have touched upon issues of religious affiliation, naming and religious upbringing of children (Hatzopoulos and Kambouri, 2010;

Nazarska and Hajdinjak, 2010). Petronoti (2006; 2007) records the feelings of alienation that Turkish fathers experienced within Greek - Turkish marriages. The decisions that Greek - Turkish couples made to baptise the children Orthodox Christians, to be addressed invariably with Greek names and surnames and to hide their Turkish origin within school environment result in the loss of the migrant's cultural capital in subtle, albeit persistent processes both within and beyond the symbolic boundaries of the family (Petronoti, 2007). Unlike Greek - Italian or Greek - German couples where migrant mothers promote rather than conceal their identity as Europeans (Lauth Bacas, 2000; Miliarini, 1997), the condition of 'refugeeness' in conjunction with 'easternness' disinherits the children of Greek - Turkish marriages from any comprehensive means of relating to Turkish culture (Petronoti, 2006). This is unlike the case of Palestinian fathers in Athens who consider it important to actively 'teach' their children how to be Palestinian from an early age because they perceive it as a way of ensuring the continuation and survival of Palestinian national identity and connections to the homeland in diaspora (Mavroudi, 2007). A small body of research on youth of migrant background in Greece has also focused on the impact of return on Greek - American or Greek - German second generation migrants to Greece (Christou, 2006; Christou, 2011; Christou, 2016; King and Christou, 2014; King et al., 2011) and citizenship, identity and belonging among youth of sub-Saharan African background in Athens (Papaioannou, 2013).

Conclusion

Cross-border marriage migration is a highly significant stream of global migration, but one that has been under-researched on a global scale, especially as a process intricately linked to family formation (Kofman, 2004; Williams, 2010). Emotional management, intimacy and love migration take place in structured and gendered inequalities and bringing religion into discussion can reverse the general idea of feminisation of marriage migration. If a rounded and gender-sensitive appreciation of marriage migration is to be achieved, then the experience of men as migrants and of the male and female partners as marriage migrants deserves the attention of researchers (Williams, 2010).

There has been no systematic empirical research in the Greek literature on mixed couples with ethnic, cultural and religious differences, mixed couples between a Greek citizen and a non-citizen third country national (undocumented migrants and refugees) or mixed couples between members of majority society and minority communities. Although cases of

conversion to Christianity have been documented in the Greek literature, no empirical study has been undertaken on religious practices of migrants and minority Muslims (Turks, Pomaks or Roma), conversion to Islam or to Christianity in Greece, least of all in the context of conjugal mixedness. Research on mixed families in Greece ought to take into consideration that families that cross real and symbolic borders produce transnationalism, operate in transnational social fields and form transnational kinship groups.

There has been little research on the issue of how children of mixed heritage relate to their heritage or on how that heritage could be passed on and valued, but much less on children with a 'contested' heritage by which one parent's past and origin are neither celebrated nor even acknowledged (Williams, 2010). Williams (2010:197) points out an urgent need for study as research that touches on this area generally indicates that women from stigmatised groups find it extremely difficult to pass on positive views of their culture with the result that children may grow up ashamed of their mother and of their heritage. In the Greek context, this could be the case of a Muslim Roma or a minority Turkish mother married to a Greek Christian man.

In the next chapter, I will analytically describe the research design, methods and strategy that I have employed in order to collect empirical data that helped me answer the research questions of this doctoral study and contribute knowledge to the identified gaps in the literature on intermarriage and mixedness in Greece.

Chapter 3

Qualitative research methodology

The aim of this chapter is to present and describe analytically the methodology and the research design of the study. It outlines the sampling strategy, the access to and recruitment of participants, the data collection methods of single, joint and online interviewing, research ethics and reflexivity. It also includes the description and analysis of techniques of qualitative data storage and management, report of sample population demographic characteristics and data coding strategies with qualitative data computer assisted software.

Research Design

Sampling Strategy

Purposive sampling was conducted to obtain data from people in as a varied range of situations as possible, taking into account nationality, religious affiliation, civil or marital status and demographic characteristics.

Given the research aims and questions, research participants should fulfil the two following minimum **sample inclusion criteria:**

i. Be institutionally affiliated with Christianity or Islam, either as their religion of origin or as their religion of choice.
ii. Be in a married or cohabiting "mixed" relationship.

The attribute values of 'relationship status' have been extended to include married and cohabiting couples in order to capture the demographic trend of declining marriage rate and increase in cohabitation as a result of the weakening control of family and religious institutions. Partner choices tend to be less endogamous in unmarried cohabitation than in marriage (Blackwell and Lichter, 2004; Bisin and Verdier, 2000; Schoen and Weinick, 1993), especially in cases that are sanctioned by religious institutions and family systems. For

instance, marriages between Muslim women and Christian men are prohibited by Islam and interreligious marriages are not performed by the Christian Orthodox Church. The research has not deliberately taken a heteronormative approach, but this has evolved due to particularities of the context and difficulties to access participants. Due to the research emphasis on religious affiliation and self-identification, sexual orientation was expected to be a sensitive topic of discussion, in particular for religiously conservative participants.

The following **types of relationships** are investigated:

i. Mixed Christian - Muslim relationships in which partners have maintained institutional affiliation with their religion of origin.
ii. Homogamous (Christian) relationships after conversion from Islam to Christianity.
iii. Homogamous (Muslim) relationships after conversion from Christianity to Islam.

For the analytical purposes of "affectionate conversion", conversion must have taken place either before the wedding with the purpose of getting married or after the wedding to a Christian or Muslim partner.

Combinations of these two criteria, i.e. religious institutional affiliation and the relationship type, could result in the following **patterns of mixed-type relationships**:

i. A Greek Christian Orthodox citizen married to or cohabiting with a Muslim immigrant partner of diverse national background, either with Greek citizenship or non-citizenship status.
ii. A Greek Christian Orthodox citizen married to or cohabiting with a Greek citizen, minority Muslim (ethnic Turk, Pomak or Roma) originating from Western Thrace.
iii. A Greek citizen, convert to Islam and married to or cohabiting with a Muslim partner.
iv. A Muslim (Greek or third country national), convert to Christian Orthodox religion and married to or cohabiting with a Greek Christian Orthodox partner.
v. Greek married citizens who have both converted to Islam. The conversion of the one partner usually precedes the conversion of the other partner or the acquaintance can take place when the one partner has converted to Islam and the other partner is Christian, either considering to convert to Islam or not. That can generate an interesting interplay of interreligious mixedness and multiple religious border crossings.

The sample selection criteria have been delimited to Muslims of Greek or other national background, purposefully excluding Albanian migrants. Although Albanian immigrants constitute two thirds of migrant population (Triandafyllidou et al., 2014) and Greek - Albanian mixed marriages represent the highest percentage between mixed marriages in Greece, Albanian migrants were purposefully excluded from the sample population. The reason of the delimitation of the research sample is that Albanians are not included in the estimate of the Muslim migrant populations in Greece (Anagnostou and Gropas, 2010; Baldwin-Edwards, 2008; Hatziprokopiou, 2016; Triandafyllidou, 2010; Trubeta, 2003; Tsitselikis, 2012b). Hatzopoulos and Kambouri (2010) report on the difficulty they encountered to recruit Albanian participants in their research study on religion; most Albanian migrants refused to participate and expressed either their ignorance on the subject or the irrelevance of the research topic to their interests.

Access to participants and recruitment

The sampling strategy included methods of **networking** and **snowballing**. Many tactics were employed in order to establish access to and communication with potential participants. These tactics included personal contacts, acquaintances and recommendations, networking with Muslim Associations, recruitment of an insider assistant, online research in search engines (e.g. google web search) and in social media networking sites (e.g. facebook).

My efforts to recruit participants through Muslim Associations did not yield the anticipated results. I felt considerably supported and assisted during my search for participants in Athens by representatives of the **Muslim Association of Greece;** I was made to feel welcomed and my research topic was met with enthusiasm and anticipation. However, despite being provided with numerous contacts, only very few responded and consented to being interviewed. My communication with the **University Graduates Association of Western Thrace Minority** and my request to identify native Greek Muslims from the Western Thrace minorities who are married or related to Christian Greeks was met unenthusiastically, while the answer I got from the **Centre of Pomak Research** was: *"there are no such couples in our social environment"*. Similarly, the president and the vice-president of the **Muslim Association of Alexandroupolis** hesitated to introduce me to mixed Christian – Muslim couples. However, they were genuinely welcoming and hospitable and I spent a lot of time with them talking about my research and the history of the Muslim minorities of Western Thrace.

Parallel to my efforts of recruiting participants through Muslim Associations, **snowball sampling** was acquiring momentum and my participants were usually eager to introduce me to their friends and acquaintances. Bearing in mind that research participants tend to introduce the researcher to people with similar socioeconomic characteristics as themselves, I purposively selected potential participants aiming to attain as much variety regarding national and socioeconomic characteristics as possible.

In my effort to attract participants, I benefited from the social network of my family in Alexandroupolis, a small city in the North Eastern part of Greece that belongs geographically in Western Thrace. One such family acquaintance, a native Roma Muslim acted as an **"insider recruitment assistant"** who helped me gain access to Avantos settlement, or as it is referred to in the local dialect, the 'mahalah' [i.e. the neighbourhood in the Turkish language or 'Katsivelika', the settlement of Katsiveli or Gyfti (gypsies)]. This settlement sprawls along Avantos Street at the outskirts of Alexandroupolis without any urban planning or design. Railway tracks are the "border" that separate the settlement from the City of Alexandroupolis and delimit their locality (Avdikos, 2000). The core of the settlement predates the compulsory population exchange of the Treaty of Lausanne (Zegkinis, 1994). The residents of the settlement of Avantos self-identify as 'Gyfti' or 'Turko-gyfti' (gypsies or Turkish gypsies) and communicate in the Turkish language. They are permanently settled in derelict houses that may not be suitable for habitation (Imam and Tsakiridi, 2003). Recruitment of participants within the boundaries of this settlement for research purposes was met with suspicion and resistance. Native Muslims in particular were disinterested in the purpose and value of research. My insider assistant advised me: *"People from the minority are illiterate, they don't know and they don't understand what research serves. They are suspicious with research surveys. The minority has gone through a lot; they have been repeatedly exploited for policy ends"* (Field notes, 26 August 2012).

I, also, obtained access to the **marriage registration catalogues** at the Registry office in the Municipality of Alexandroupolis. I literally went through all the marriage registration catalogues, starting with 1982 and checked the spouses' religious affiliation. I counted thirty one (31) mixed Christian - Muslim marriages, in the period 1984 - 2011, registered at the Registry Office in the Municipality of Alexandroupolis. The information that was retrieved from the registration catalogues was used only for reference purposes and not for recruitment purposes.

Internet is a viable research medium for overcoming issues around access and distance (Evans et al., 2008). Web search in **social media networking websites** facilitated the communication with a very specific group of the sample population, namely Greek converts to Islam who reside in

Greater Athens. Some Greek converts to Islam who had either gone public with their conversion narrative or were very active in the Muslim Association, proved easily approachable. Some of them had appeared in popular talk shows on Greek TV channels, while others had published eponymous articles in newspapers, blogs or websites. They had a friendly attitude towards me and were particularly eager to meet me and to be interviewed.

These methods of access and recruitment generated the identification of around fifty cases of mixed Christian - Muslim couples or around a hundred potential individual participants. The recruitment of some participants failed for various reasons. Some people specifically objected to signing the consent form and being audio-recorded. Some of them felt that the research aims were intruding into their personal life, while others were disinterested, indifferent or suspicious towards research purposes or unwilling to participate due to personal commitments or practical impediments. Negotiations of participation to the research were interrupted every time potential participants would object to signing the consent form and to being audio-recorded or expressed their discomfort with the research aims. Negotiations on setting up interviews resulted in the final recruitment of forty participants.

Data collection methods

Fieldwork was conducted between June and October 2012 and took place in Western Thrace, Thessaloniki and Athens. Localities were selected based on the concentration of native and immigrant Muslim populations in Greece, according to the Immigrants' First Legalisation Programme and the Labour Employment Organisation (OAED) data.

Negotiating the interview setting: "Planned flexibility"

During the communication with potential participants, prior to setting up and scheduling the interviews, I explicitly stated my intentions to interview both partners separately. Separate interviews enable partners to tell their story from their own perspective (Morris, 2001). This method recognises that people's experiences are not identical to those of their partners and enables capturing these unique individual perspectives (Taylor and De Vocht, 2011). Separate interviews give spouses privacy to tell their versions and secrets and discuss their feelings about the other spouse (Hertz, 1995).

It became evident early in the fieldwork that some potential participants, far from sharing my methodological concerns for privacy and confidentiality, perceived the request for individual interviews as intrusive. Several couples hesitated at the request for separate interviews saying that they had no secrets from each other. Requiring separate interviews could potentially generate anxiety within couples because this approach might imply that secrets exist and that one person is willing to share these secrets with the researcher and not with his or her partner (Taylor and De Vocht, 2011:1583). Separate interviews bear the potential of stirring up antagonisms as the participants may want to know what the other said with subsequent disclosure or nondisclosure causing distress (Morris, 2001). Participants may feel that they are tested against differences and discrepancies in their narratives and thus separate interviews are seen as disruptive of their mutually negotiated shared meaning. Additionally, some potential participants said that they would feel more comfortable at each other's presence. The interview setting may cause negative feelings to the participants such as anxiety, fear, threat or jealousy (Reuband, 1992). The presence of the partner can be offered as assistance and support that can alleviate feelings of threat.

Questions of privacy intrusion, exclusion of participants and reflexivity on the researcher's authority, caused me to refine the research methods and become more flexible, responsive and respectful to the preferences of my participants. I moved from a focus solely on individual data collection method to one that incorporated the exploration of a concurrent joint framework. The initial research design, also, required that both partners in mixed relationship would be interviewed. However, in case one of the two partners declined to participate in the interview, flexibility of research design was permitted and the research proceeded with the participants who consented to participate. I opted for a strategy of 'planned flexibility' (Bazeley, 2013) to offer the choice to the couple to be interviewed together, separately or selectively in good faith of 'empowering' the participants and in the hope of improving the odds of participation (Heaphy and Einarsdottir, 2013).

Doing the interviews

Interviews were arranged by telephone and e-mails. Interview encounters took place in private places, in public places (mainly cafés or playgrounds for children), in workplaces and online. The interviews lasted from 30 minutes to 2 hours.

The negotiations with the potential participants resulted in various interview situations:

- Nine couples agreed to be interviewed separately resulting in eighteen single interviews. They were persuadable through explaining the project's methodological requirements (Morris, 2001).

- Eight participants were interviewed at one-to-one basis, but for various reasons access to their partner was not made possible. Six male participants specifically blocked access to their partner. Despite my persistent attempts, I was not permitted to come in touch with some of the female partners and I was left under the impression that these women were not informed about this research or asked if they would like to participate. Other reasons on non-attendance were lack of common communication language and reluctance to participate. In two other cases, in which only the female partners were interviewed, the reasons of non-participation were ill-health and disinterest towards research purposes.

- Seven couples agreed to be interviewed jointly or in the presence of each other.

Table 3.1. Single and joint interviews

	Single	**Single Online**	**Joint**
	no. of interviews (n=22)	no. of interviews (n=4)	no. of interviews (n=7)
Both partners	14	4	7
Only male partner	6		
Only female partner	2		

In a total of thirty three interviews, twenty two were identified as face-to-face single participant interviews, four as single participant interviews using Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) audio and video technology and seven as mixed-sex joint interviews.

These are semi-structured interviews where the respondents were encouraged to talk at length about their experiences and perspectives through open-ended questioning and probing. The same demographic questionnaire and interview schedule were used to guide all interviews. The interview guide was listed in eight sets of themes: demographic characteristics of participants, background information on relationship, religiosity and perception of partner's religious difference, religious practices (holidays, customs and traditions), dynamics between religions, self-identification, interaction with extended family and society, religion and naming of children and religious conversion.

Third persons' presence in the interview setting

One of the basic rules of interviewing requires that the respondent will be interviewed alone with no other person present (Hartman, 1994; Reuband, 1992). However, an interview is not a laboratory setting, and interviewers have problems with controlling the presence of other persons than the interviewee (Boeije, 2004; Reuband, 1992; Rubin and Rubin, 2011; Zipp and Toth, 2002). In various interview settings I was taken by surprise, I had to confront unexpected situations and judge the interview situation spontaneously; setting my own rules about the interview situation proved harder. Even when individual interviews had been negotiated and agreed upon by both participants and myself, in many cases the partner or some other person was present as a third person in the interview setting. Seymour, Dix and Eardley (1995) suggested that in the real world, practical and social imperatives often mean that interviewers find a second person present and contributing, despite the intention for individual interviews. This is a distinctly different interview situation than a scheduled and pre-arranged conjoint interview with both partners.

The presence rate seems to be increasing considerably if the sample consists of married respondents or those living with a partner (Hartmann, 1994; Morris, 2001; Reuband, 1992). In a total of twenty-six single interviews, third persons were present in the interview setting in fourteen interviews. Some partners were present for parts of or for the entire interview, walking in and out the interview setting. In some other cases, relatives (children, mother-in-law and sister) moved within earshot. The presence of the partner or another person as a third person in the interview may have had an effect on the participant's responses. It is possible that the respondents may have not been willing to disclose some information in front of a third person or may have been tempted to present a certain impression to the interviewer and the third person by orienting their answers towards what they think is presumably approved by the other person present (Boeije, 2004; Hartmann, 1994). Several studies found evidence that family members interviewed in each other's presence gave more similar answers than when interviewed separately, using assertive self-presentation to convey a positive impression on the interviewer (Boeije, 2004; Reuband, 1992; Zipp and Toth, 2002).

The effect caused by the presence of a third person in the interview setting on the quantity and quality of gathered data and the interview dynamics is difficult to appraise (Boeije, 2004; Rubin and Rubin, 2011). Taylor and De Vocht (2011) have explored another meaning in the presence of the other (and all the "others" in a person's life) whether we interview couples individually, jointly or in the presence of a third person. Circumspection does not necessarily

require the physical presence of a partner in the interview, for even though he or she might be absent in individual interviews, he or she is still present in the sense of "being with" (Taylor and De Vocht, 2011: 1580). Even single interview narratives are relational and incorporate other actors in the narrative (Ryan, 2013a).

Online interviews

A flexible interview medium approach was adopted to overcome the physical constraints with participants who were physically located at distance. The recruitment process was facilitated by a social media networking internet site and the idea to conduct the interview over Skype came up during my communication with one female participant. I used Skype to conduct four semi-structured single participant interviews. Skype is a software application using voice over internet protocol (VoIP) audio/video technology that enables synchronous audio and video remote conferencing (King and Horrocks, 2010).

The participants were familiar with the use of skype as means of communication with their kith and kin. The relationship of a Syrian Muslim and his Greek wife, convert to Islam, was initiated in Greece through peer relations. They then got married in Greece both by a civil and an Islamic ceremony, while the Greek woman converted to Islam at an Islamic prayer hall in Greece. A few years later, they decided to move to South England. The other couple, an Indian Muslim and his Greek-Cypriot wife, convert to Islam, followed a reverse trajectory. They met in Great Britain, while they were students at a British university; they got married in Great Britain both by a civil and an Islamic ceremony, and the Greek-Cypriot woman converted to Islam in Great Britain. They decided to move to Cyprus after the birth of their second child. In both cases, these mixed couples belonged to and interacted within transnational family and social relationships that impacted on their relationships and on their decision to relocate, as I will show analytically in the empirical chapters.

The method of VoIP technology for remote online interviews has great potential to become an alternative to the "gold standard" of face-to-face interviews due to the synchronous nature of real-time interaction (Flick, 2009; Hay-Gibson, 2009). This argument is put forward as software such as Skype provides not only synchronous interaction between the researcher and participants, but also the visual and interpersonal constraints of the interaction are to some extent overcome through video technology (Evans et al., 2008; Hanna, 2012). Participants can remain in the comfortable and safe location of their home, while being interviewed without

the sense that the researcher is intruding in their personal space (Hanna, 2012). The "online" participants were at their home and in direct contact with other family members. For example, two participants were able to take care of their baby daughter during the interview. Although skype interviews may have hindered some of the subtleties of physical interactions, they have in fact facilitated intense and repetitive interactions between the participants and me. Remaining "skype contacts" and being visible to each other when we were both online allowed for multiple communications, repeated interviews and chances for clarification of information provided, as well as the development of friendship with some female participants. Participants in skype interviews were open to meeting me "offline".

Online participants were more explicit and straightforward and remained more focused during the interview compared to face-to-face participants. The synchronous online interaction combined the generally more task-focused, 'instrumental' nature of telephone mediated interviews (King and Horrocks, 2010:82) with the visual contact of face-to-face interaction. In practice there were a few technical setbacks experienced during Skype conferences. For example, at one instance, low-speed internet connectivity obliged us to turn the web camera off for some part of the interview. One male participant stated that he would feel more comfortable to keep the camera off during the interview. The duration of skype interviews was between 45 and 75 minutes that corresponds to the average duration of face-to-face interviews. However, the technical constraints and the spatial restrictions of the computer screen may have impacted on the interview duration.

The synchronous nature of online interaction between the researcher and the participant mediates the dichotomy between public and private sphere and creates social space in online environments. There is limited visibility as defined by the computer screen. Participants are spatially limited in front of the computer screen in their private space while the research interview is socially situated. One female Muslim participant asked me to confirm that there is no other person, especially no man, present at my place as she was not covered with her hijab. There is a computer screen frame and different spaces into this frame (Bertrand and Bourdeau, 2010: 75).

Joint interviews

There are many opportunities and challenges associated with the joint research design. Joint interviews i.e. one interviewer with two respondents generate interactions that are

qualitatively different from sole interviews (Arksey, 1996; Seale et al., 2008). Allan (1980) maintains that interviewing spouses together may lead to data being generated that could not be obtained from interviews with individuals. The interaction of the spouses in the interview can be observed directly and thus be used as data and it can lead to a fuller understanding of the research topic than would have occurred otherwise (Allan, 1980). This form of interviewing provides an opportunity to witness how the couple perform together, how they attempt to support and influence one another and how they cope with disagreement, gaining insight into relationship dynamics and gender roles.

Joint interviews bear the potential of the domination of the one partner to the extent of silencing the other partner (Arksey and Knight, 1999:76). In some joint interviews the male respondent dominated the interview setting, voicing the couple's ideological and religious discourse and mirroring dominant male gender roles due to his socioeconomic characteristics or his personal attitude. In these cases, the women were considerably silenced to the extent of even being interrupted by their partner when attempting to talk. In some other joint interviews, though, the female respondents prevailed over interview dynamics being considerably more talkative than their partners conveying rich accounts of events and experiences. I tried to give attention to the silenced partner and encourage him or her to respond, trying to obtain a relatively equal level of commitment and response level from both participants. However, my intervention did not usually affect the interview dynamics considerably, which were probably determined by already established relationship dynamics. Joint interviews tend to reduce data as partners either agree and reaffirm or interrupt each other. In these cases, the individual perspective or subjective version of the events is irretrievably lost.

The joint interview setting provides a social space in which it is possible that disagreements, frictions, antagonisms or conflicts of interest may be stirred up within the couple (Arksey, 1996). Tensions and points of difference between the couple were exposed during the course of some joint interviews. I repeatedly shared my ethical concerns with participants who disagreed with each other in an effort to moderate dissents. One female participant responded to my ethical concerns: *"Don't worry about this! We don't fight. When we fight about an idea or a belief, we like to discuss. We don't have negative feelings"*. Similarly, her husband claimed that: *"I listen to what she thinks and this is very good. But she thinks something, I think something else… We have a mind, we can think, we don't fight, we don't do anything bad".* Research with mixed couples in a joint research design raises ethical

considerations about the responsibility of the researcher about post-interview relationship impact.

Patterns of a couple's dialogue as well as the content of their conversation can contribute to an enhanced understanding of their relationship (Racher et al., 2000). In the following contentious exchange between two conjugal partners, we can observe relationship dynamics as prompted by my questioning of the wife's statement that it is easier for a Christian Orthodox to live in Greece.

> *Me: Why do you think it is easier?*
>
> *Female participant: Because his mother said that I can find a better job, if I am an Orthodox.*
>
> *Male participant: She never said this.*
>
> *Female participant: She said it.*
>
> *Male participant: No.*
>
> *Female participant: Ok she didn't say it.*
>
> *Male participant: She just asked if you speak the language.*
>
> *Female participant: No. She told me that "if you become an Orthodox, you can find better jobs". Not better jobs… you can find job easily.*
>
> *Male participant: Easier, not easily!*
>
> *Female participant: Ok, he is fixing my English [smiling]. But she is right, because I know people who became Orthodox and they are finding jobs.*

The (Greek) husband employs a controversial and assertive self-presentation style to refute a statement attributed to his mother, while "fixing her English" could be perceived as improper, impolite or even deprecatory. In this dialogue exchange, the (Turkish) wife moderates her contending style and attempts to restore the initial impression of criticising her mother-in-law by endorsing her statement.

During joint interviews, partners often expressed their opinions in a running stream of comments, supporting and reaffirming each other and constructing shared meaning. This is the opposite case than the previous dialogue exchange. In this reassuring occurrence, the partners completed each other in a string of thoughts.

Male participant: Religion is a very big thing, Heaven is not won easily. Both Orthodox and Muslim pursue it and it is a terrible struggle.

Female participant: It's a long way…

Male participant: It's a long way…

Female participant: Maybe you are your whole life…

Male participant: praying and the last seconds you end up in hell or the contrary

Female participant: You are judged every single moment.

Whether meaning is mutually constructed or the one partner echoes the ideological and religious pattern formulated by the more dominant partner can be analysed only within the wider context of the joint interview setting. The observation of this couple's interaction during the interview encounter indicated that the male partner dominated the formulation of the religious discourse.

Despite my initial reluctance to conduct joint interviews with both partners in mixed relationships, the joint interview setting offered insight into the dynamics, roles and interaction between participants. Selves were presented and often contested through lively exchanges and interactions.

The interview as social encounter

In-depth social science interviews are situations of social encounter that involve processes of bonding and bridging, of taking and abandoning positions, of constructing and de-constructing commonalities between the researcher and the researched guided by its own rules and dynamics and participants' intentions, assumptions and positions (Nowicka and Ryan, 2015). During the interview encounter, there were clear assumptions about categories, concepts of ethnicity, nationality and gender. Participants presumably positioned me as Greek, Christian Orthodox young woman, student or researcher.

Stress and pressure was put on me by some participants who tried to ally with me on the basis of assumed commonalities and shared identities (Ryan, 2015) based on assumptions about nationality, religiosity, culture, life experiences and common historical memory. These alliances, empowered by the authority of the researcher, were attempted in order to convince

their partner about the validity and verifiability of their statement. One Greek female participant said: *"I'm from Greece as you know and maybe you have the same experience"*, while the migrant male participant replied: "*She [referring to me] went to Cairo… ask her about people in Cairo!"*

The complex, mobile trajectories of life can both distance the researcher and the researched or create unexpected commonalities that bring them together for a certain moment in time (Nowicka and Ryan, 2015). The pronoun 'we' was used by participants as a shifting category to signify relations between people who share common ethnic or national origin, common religion or are in an intimate relationship. Sometimes it was used to signify the 'we' as Christians versus Muslims, 'we' Greeks different than foreigners or it meant 'we' as a couple. As a reply to the question – "what or where are we inside or outside of?" posed by Louise Ryan (2015) – I was perceived as an insider in the 'we' as Greek Christian Orthodox and as an outsider in the 'we' as a couple.

Internet technology enhanced both the recruitment process and the interaction between the participants and me. Some participants suggested that we "become friends" on Facebook. Having access to their personal Facebook homepage was feeding me with information about their personal and everyday life and about their interests, concerns, political and religious views. Greek converts to Islam and devout Muslim migrants, who had particularly stated to me during the interview that they are hiding their Muslim identity in social and family settings, represented themselves actively as Muslims on the social media networking sites. They created Facebook pages under their post-conversion Muslim name and they constantly posted articles and pictures with religious content. Religion seemed to define their everyday routine and the internet provided the means through which Muslim identity could be enacted. Having access to my participants' online profile influenced me in two ways: First, I felt that this was reinforcing or correcting my assumptions about them. Second, it influenced my activity on my Facebook homepage. Although I share feminist research ethics and I always had a 'human face' towards participants and disclosed information about myself whenever I was asked to (even though I never expressed my religious views or views on mixed relationships during any interview), I felt I had to abstain from expressing any religious views on my Facebook homepage out of fear that it may be disrespectful or insulting towards my participants.

Apart from online contacts, the interview as social encounter initiated several social contacts with some female participants. Social contacts, encounters and meetings with female participants raised issues of ethical concern. At one such encounter, eighteen months after

the joint interview with Polina, a Greek woman and her Egyptian Muslim husband, she informed me that her marriage had failed. She denounced the marriage as 'bogus' and felt distressed from the divorce procedure. The analysis of the joint interview data had indicated tensions and points of dissent in their relationship dynamics. This information reinforced the data analysis. The disclosure of information raised an ethical dilemma whether I should use it for research purposes. I chose to mention it as evidence of 'bogus' marriages, without disclosing the rest of the information and the events that were shared with me. I also think that this example can be used as evidence of how research on intermarriage could benefit from longitudinal research methods.

At times, I felt that sustaining online communication and social contacts with my participants put great demands on my working schedule. This made me reflect on the type of communication I would like to retain with them (Ryan, 2008). I felt guilty and I wanted to avoid giving the impression that I "used" them to get data for my research and afterwards, I was cutting off relationships with them. The proliferation of social contacts and the abundance of information during fieldwork can be very fascinating, especially for a novice researcher. My supervisors' encouragement during this transitory phase from fieldwork to the researcher's solitude task of data analysis and their advice to 'dis-engage' from fieldwork helped me deal with my feelings.

The process of talking about personal experiences during the research interviews might make some participants aware of aspects of their lives that they had not previously considered (Taylor and De Vocht, 2011). Interviewing may trigger a process of reflection on issues they had not considered or questioned previously. Participation in my research initiated this reflective process for some participants. A female Greek participant expressed that they had been wondering prior to the interview what I was going to ask them and were discussing what they should answer to my questions. She said: *"Now… with the occasion of your research, we were thinking if we have children what religion we will give to them. And to be honest we didn't end up somewhere…"* Many participants mentioned that they had never discussed these issues outside the interview setting, not even with their spouse or partner. A male Greek minority Muslim participant said: *"You see my age now… I have lived my life… I have learnt… I have seen… However I never tried to transfer it to someone else. It happened now with you but I won't try to transfer my experience to others or stay and talk. I bend my head and work. I don't bother with anyone… I don't care what other people do or say."* On the contrary, Muslim activists and advocates had previous experience with interviews. Comments such as *"I believe*

that as I have said in previous interviews before, on TV as well…" revealed that this narrative had been rehearsed publicly on other occasions. Getting myself prepared for the interview, I read the online conversion narratives of two Greek female converts to Islam. During the interview, when I asked them to talk about their conversion, I was sure I had read the exact same narratives online, phrased even with the same words, reflecting that these narratives are public and rehearsed.

Interviews are social encounters and feelings of uneasiness, agitation or awkwardness cannot be missed from social interaction. Two female converts expressed their discomfort about some of my questions because *"all people ask them about this"*. A Greek female convert to Islam said: *"I haven't done anything that I should be embarrassed of either before or after the conversion. Like everybody keeps asking this question"*. Other participants would become unnecessarily defensive to some of my questions. A Saudi Arabian male Muslim when asked about the religion of his children replied: *"And what is it with Muslims? What difference does it make? Why if they grew up as Christians what difference would it make?"* Jokes or humorous answers also played their own discursive role. One male Muslim participant, when asked to recall the pre-conversion period in their conjugal relationship, answered jokingly: *"In the first year of our marriage, when my wife was Christian, I was beating her every day from the morning until the night to make her change [laughing]. I wasn't giving her food; she was locked inside the house with chains [laughing]."* Interviews, either single or joint, as social encounters between the researcher and the researched raise issues of ethical research.

Research ethics

Ethical issues and ethical principles permeated each stage of the research process (Flick, 2009; Mason, 2002; Morse, 1998; Silverman, 2010). Research was based on the principles of:

- Informed consent and voluntary participation, i.e. the research participants agreed to partake voluntarily on the basis of information given to them by the researcher.
- Confidentiality of information.
- Protection of anonymity of participants.
- Non-maleficence, i.e. participants should not be subject to any harm or disadvantage as a result of the research.

Ensuring confidentiality and anonymity was a very important condition for some participants in order to consent to an ethically informed interview. Obtaining consent from participants to participate in the study and to be audio-recorded was straightforward. On arrival to the interview setting, I explained the research aims to the participants, I distributed to them the information sheet (appendix I) and participants signed the consent form (appendix II). I had both forms printed in the Greek and the English language for participants to choose a language of their own convenience. For participants with limited literacy in the Greek language, I read through the participant information sheet and the consent form.

The 'informed' part of the informed consent creates a challenge for online research. Simply sending an information sheet by e-mail may not be enough to ensure the information is actually read and understood prior to the interview (King and Horrocks, 2010:99). Regarding my four online participants, I requested that a signed consent form is scanned and sent to me electronically rather than relying on their oral consent. There is considerable debate about the extent to which the development of online research methods raises entirely new ethical issues for qualitative researchers (Holge-Hazelton, 2002; James and Busher, 2007). Although the ethical principles do not change in the online environment, the blurring of the division between public and private space in online environments sets up some distinctive challenges for decision-making in research ethics (King and Horrocks, 2010:97).

Anonymity of participants is guaranteed through the removal of personal identifiers (name, residential location, place of employment). All the names that have been attributed to participants are pseudonyms. Other background information and particular recognisable distinctive features have been left out to reduce the risk of identification of participants. Decisions regarding the anonymisation of the data were also made on the basis of the effects on individuals as group members. The anonymity and change of recognisable distinctive features was very important as some participants acting within Muslim communities and associations may still be able to identify each other. Participants who are engaged in public roles, diverse activities and organisations may want to give public voice to their experiences. Converts to Islam in particular may treat their conversion narratives as public accounts attaching missionary aspect to its content. All data is anonymised and treated as confidential solely for research purposes.

The style of interviewing and probing was open-ended and non-intrusive, allowing scope to the interviewees to reveal the kind of information that is more appropriate and relevant to their own experiences on their own will. The participants were informed about their right to decline to answer any question they consider intrusive, discomforting or disrespectful in any way. The types

of questions that some participants were reluctant to elaborate on concerned their religiosity, belief in God and their personal perspective of a Deity. Another participant declined to answer whether he and his wife had done an Islamic wedding. No participant expressed any discomfort or anxiety as a result of the research process.

Reflexivity

Research diary

The documentation of processes and the contextual enrichment of statements or activities substantiates reality and transforms the relations in the field into the form of text (Flick, 2009). According to Geertz (1973:19): *"The ethnographer inscribes social discourse; he writes it down. In so doing, he turns it from a passing event, which exists only in its own moment of occurrence, into an account, which exists in its inscription and can be re-consulted".* Goffman (1989:131) advised fieldworkers to write their field notes as lushly and loosely as they can, as long as they put themselves into it, where they say "I felt that".

I recorded my thoughts and observations during fieldwork in a handwritten research diary. I usually took notes immediately after leaving the field, withdrawing in my solitude to reflect on the interview encounter and interaction. Sometimes, I also noted down thoughts and memories while transcribing. My research diary includes extensive descriptions of interview settings, events and happenings, impressions about the rapport between the participants and me, my methodological concerns, scepticism about the naturalness of recordings, thoughts about the presence of third persons in the interview setting and the agency of the researcher to impose own conditions, 'off the record' meetings and discussions, my emotions and feelings like frustration about racism or tiredness. I reflected on my skills as interviewer and tried to improve my interviewing style by avoiding guiding questions that could lead the participants towards specific answers. The following excerpts from my research diary are indicative samples of my reflective thoughts, methodological concerns and feelings that accompanied me during fieldwork.

Monday, 20th August 2012

I am outside my participants' apartment waiting for the door to open. He said he is willing to talk to me and help me with my project as long as I promise confidentiality. He said that he knows where I live and if he listens to anything that he told me in the news, he will kill me! [...]

The door finally opened and I was there talking to a middle-aged man, a much younger woman and their children coming and going around. The woman was obviously shy and taken aback by my visit. As if she is not used to having guests in her house, or, wait a minute, is she? How often young people, young white people visit them? How often do people really want to listen to what she wants to say? They tell me not to be shy, it's just a poor house, they say. She says I shouldn't have taken my sandals off, she insists to put them back on but I refuse. A gypsy woman cohabiting with a Greek man who is not local. That should probably ease things up. They talk about problems, racism. The word race is constantly echoing, *ratsa, ratsa, ratsa*... but they won't put a name to this race... I asked them if race was their biggest concern, more than religion? Race is obvious, they say. If you saw us, would you know she is Muslim?

Sunday, 26th August 2012

I had a meeting this afternoon with a Pomak Muslim. There was no way he would sign the consent form and agree to be audio-taped. He asked me to hand him my audio-recorder just to make sure that I was not recording him secretly. He was so suspicious and hostile that I felt threatened. But he then made turkish coffee for me and offered me a cigarette and stayed and talked. He told me his whole story. I can now see clear that the issue of mixed relationships is very controversial in small communities. I felt disappointed today, driving for half an hour, under the hot sun on a Sunday afternoon to be treated with so much suspicion..

Minority Muslims are the hardest to approach. The minority Muslims I have met so far are very suspicious and reluctant to speak but at the same time very polite and hospitable, willing to help me but not really willing to

speak to me. Most of them have repeated their invitations to visit them, that I' m welcome at their houses. What is it of greater benefit? to approach them and extract whatever information I can get and have the benefit of meeting hard-to-reach under-researched minority people or abandon my efforts to approach them and come in touch with people who are willing to provide richer accounts of their experiences, opinions and beliefs?

[..] It' s hard to set up better interview conditions with minority Muslims. When I find myself in the field I can' t be sure what conditions I' m going to encounter. I' m not sure whom I' m going to meet (for example I expected her husband to be there as well) and I' m not sure where I' m going to meet them. Only the fact that they accept me at their houses is a gain; imposing my own conditions seems already beyond the situation.

The balance between educated researcher and hardly literate minority Muslims is very uneven. Very suspicious that I represent some authority or organisation.

Saturday, 8th September 2012

I' m in Athens. I' m here to meet Greek converts to Islam. I expected that they would be willing to talk to me for the following reasons: 1) They have already gone public with their faith. Therefore, they don' t perceive my research as intruding. 2) They are educated, self-reflexive people who comprehend the value of my research 3) They are proud of their choice. They are adults who decided and chose what to believe and how to practice. They want to talk about it.

These interviews with converts are so different than other interviews with mixed couples. The conversion narrative is important to them. They are devout Muslims. They have read a lot about Islam and Islamic scholars. They keep on asking me if I have read any of these scholars.

I need to transcribe these interviews with converts asap in order to compile the questions and work on improving my interview guide.

Researcher's note

Undertaking research with Greek Christian and Muslim populations of diverse national backgrounds prompted a long process of reflection on how my academic research related to my personal experiences of growing up in a small city in Western Thrace. My hometown, Alexandroupolis is a provincial port city that is the capital of Evros prefecture (one of the three prefectures constituting Western Thrace together with the prefectures of Komotini and Xanthi) and finds itself only 40km away from the borders with Turkey. Residents of Alexandroupolis take aloof pride in the fact that Alexandroupolis, being a militarised zone due to proximity with Turkey, was cleared of Turkish ethnic populations which for national security reasons where withdrawn in Komotini and Xanthi. There is only a settlement where "Turko-gyfti" (Turkish gypsies) reside at the "mahalah" of Avantos, beyond the railway lines, isolated and separated from "us", the residents of Alexandroupolis. In my childhood memories, "Turkogyfti" figure paradoxically as simultaneously visible and non-existent. Reflecting on my memories, I could say that they are visible because of their distinctive characteristics (skin colour, weak constitution, Muslim attire and deviant behaviour) and non-existent as a result of lack of any social standing within the society of Alexandroupolis. Similarly, Pomaks who live in the mountainous areas of Evros prefecture are isolated and separated from the dominant Greek society. If it wasn't for my mother who talked me into taking a road trip to the North mountainous area, I would never have seen the blonde Slav-looking highlander Pomaks! Alexandroupolis differs considerably from Komotini and Xanthi where mosques are predominantly visible and Turkish ethnic Muslims participate actively at least in the economic activities of the *agora* (the market). Komotini and Xanthi are, as one participant put it, *"multicultural cities but far from mixed"*.

My childhood memories are abundant with images of Turkish Muslims for an additional reason: my parents took me often on trips and daily excursions to Turkey. I can recall visiting at a very young age the house where my paternal grandmother was born in Keşan that now belongs to Turkey and being treated with *çay* (tea) from the Turkish owners. While this visit was undertaken with complete emotional detachment on my side, I can now understand as a social researcher the value of this recollection as an oral history narrative and place it in the specific historical context of the Greek-Turkish population exchange in 1923. However, nationalistic or Turko-phobic discourse was not part of our family trips to Turkey. Trips to several places in Minor Asia (e.g. Istanbul, Troy) were undertaken mostly for educational purposes.

Turkish culture, Islamic symbols and distinctive Balkan Muslim attire (e.g. images of women covered up with a headscarf) were familiar to me as part of my experiences. This can partly explain my difficulty of relating to literature on European Islam in which Islam is always perceived as the "Other", "beyond borders" and opposite to secularism. For me, Islam had always been there; Islam was not a religion that immigrants brought with them and actually, in historical terms, Ottoman Muslims had lived in Thrace for many centuries. This is very accurately expressed in a phrase that one minority ethnic Turk participant furiously exclaimed: *"I am more local than locals themselves and I am being treated as a foreigner!"* The other reason is that literature on secularism is similarly out of tune with my experiences as a Greek. Greece is a conservative religious country in which state and Church are inseparable institutions. Children are indoctrinated in Orthodox Christianity and are disciplined through multiple religious practices before they even reach an age they can critically filter information and determine their own religiosity (such examples are the Morning Prayer at school and the icons of Jesus Christ hanging on the walls of every classroom). However, even if I cannot relate to literature on secularism, my experiences have prepared me for the resurgence of religion in world politics and the salience of religion in European societies.

Undertaking research and delving into existing bibliography on Western Thrace Muslim communities, ranging from ambiguous lay bibliography reproducing nationalistic stereotypical ideas of hetero-definitions to academic literature mostly written in the 1990s were crucial in initiating a process of reflection as social researcher. Whatever I had heard and I had witnessed regarding the Muslim communities started finding a new place in my mind. I realised that I grew up in Western Thrace but I practically knew nothing about all these people living next to me. I never bothered to relate to them except for when I needed them for research purposes. While reading literature on social exclusion, preposterous restrictions imposed on the Muslim communities and the Greek national strategic policy of keeping Thrace purposively economically underdeveloped to discourage Turkish irredentism and "to avoid Western Thrace becoming the new Cyprus", it was the first moment after already two years deep into my doctoral research that I felt really and genuinely angry. I felt angry because keeping Western Thrace intentionally underdeveloped, had determined, shaped and impacted on "our" lives, on the lives of all of "us", majority and minority communities and had bound us in the same "zero opportunities" living and similar fate of immigration to escape provincial backwardness and conservatism. I felt angry with the narrow-minded, double standard policies of the ignorant, aloof and nationalistic state of Athens; nationalistic in its foreign policy vis-à-vis the Turkish state and discriminatory against its own Greek citizens.

These feelings of anger unravelled emotions that had been repressed and had been silenced from the multi-faceted narratives of my Greek identity. Over the past decades, I have repeatedly been the target of comments made by Athenians like “there are some Turks living over there somewhere at the borders” and “you don’t look like one of them” or the target of jokes by all those Greek men “who were forced to serve the Greek army in Evros borderland”. I’ve always felt clearly that I belong to the Greek side of the border and moreover, I am clearly and distinctively perceived as Greek in my interactions with Turkish, British or minority ethnic Turks. Additional layers built on in my identity are those after living for almost 10 years abroad. I am often perceived as an expatriate Greek with non-Greek manners (even though this has always been the case). I can now understand how my origin from a small provincial city close to the Turkish borders relates to this long ride through intellectual passages, multiple identifications and understandings of ethnic constructions. Doctoral research has been a self-exploratory and self-growth process that led me to discoveries of new meanings and multiple national and transnational identifications.

My life has been full with multiple identifications and multiple ethnic, cultural and spiritual border crossings. I think this is the reason why at the initial stage of my research, I was fascinated with the phenomenon of religious conversion and I admired converts as people who dared to cross religious borders. The process of confronting my feelings of anger uncovered, opened up and stirred my intellectual fascination towards the Muslim minority populations. Institutional conversion may be very obvious, overt, visible, highly publicised and often promoted for political purposes. However, all these Muslim populations represented by my participants deal with multiple identifications and subtle, covert, perplexed, symbolic identifications that take a lot of time, knowledge, intellectual effort and courage to acknowledge, to admit, to recognise and to bring into the light. I wish to acknowledge the contribution of my supervisors, Professor Louise Ryan and Professor Eleonore Kofman who persistently urged me to explore “mixtures” and “mixedness” and take a longer but so much more rewarding intellectual journey.

In the winter of 2013, I found myself on a bus during a return journey from Istanbul, which lies 350km from my hometown. I was observing my co-sojourners when I came to realise that these were the same Turkish ethnic minority Muslims, using the regular transport connections that help sustain communication networks between the local Muslim communities of Western Thrace and surrounding societies, in Eastern (Turkish) Thrace and especially, Istanbul often described in the literature (Zaimakis and Kaprani, 2005). Muslim women dressed in distinctive

Balkan Muslim attire and with faces without make-up would get in the bus after every stop in the cities of Eastern Thrace with tearful eyes; tears fallen when leaving their relatives in their Turkish motherland. I started imagining my participants in these same buses undertaking this journey to meet either their Greek partners or their Turkish families, probably many times with tears in their eyes. And I was there, in the same bus, following the trajectories that my participants and many other people before and after them had taken, experiencing the same feelings of hope and agony as my co-sojourners.

My journey to Istanbul in the winter of 2013 led me to academic realisations as I experienced that my research was made of flesh and blood. I was re-positioning myself from a social researcher to a fascinated and enchanted subject under research. All these journeys, border crossings, self-explorations, feelings of excitement or inevitable mental fatigue, as well as the suppressed and subconscious allure and exoticism of Islam had irrevocably stirred my intellectual fascination. There were times I would come to realise that I was falling in the trap of romanticising and sentimentalising my research, while I wanted to resist the crude rationale of tactics or strategies of family migration. This attempt to navigate the emotional terrain of my research does not undermine my professionalism as a researcher but adds to the rigour of social science research (Ryan and Golden, 2006). Every journey brings fatigue and pain of separation; however, I appreciated all the explorations, the discoveries and the birth of new intellectual space. My supervisors, family and academic colleagues shared part of my experiences with me and supported me dearly.

Data management, recording and preparation for analysis

Storage and data management strategies are very important for preparing data for analysis and ensuring data integrity (Bazeley, 2013). Recording the data and transcribing the recordings transform the interesting realities into text for analytical purposes (Flick, 2009). In order to ensure data integrity, I audio-recorded and fully transcribed verbatim all interviews. The interviews that were conducted in the Greek language were fully transcribed into the Greek language and were translated into the English language. The interviews that were conducted in English language were fully transcribed in the English language. Data was stored both in the Greek and the English language.

Transcription and translation have been dealt with as interpretative endeavors and processes enhanced by my overlapping roles as an interviewer, transcriber and translator. My initial

challenge has been to stay close and true to the words of participants, without losing the flair, colour and vibrancy of the Greek language, especially when participants used expressions or proverbs. However, the concern with exactness should not predominate; otherwise, the quality of translation may be compromised. Translation from the Greek into the English language is an act of representation of participants as fluent English speakers. For instance, some participants who were illiterate with poor Greek and prone to grammatical errors are represented in the text translated into English as fluent English speakers. The educational level of these participants can only be represented in the original Greek transcript and it is, unfortunately, lost in the context of translation into the English language.

There is no neutral position from which to translate and the power relationships within research need to be acknowledged (Temple and Young, 2004). The old ethnic classifications carry within them a historical burden of discrimination (Beck-Gernsheim, 2002:122). Language problems come up when we try to define the Muslim minorities of Western Thrace. The use of the term “Muslim minority” presents the minority as a unifying whole and obscures the existence of at least three minority communities. To avoid the Turkification of the “Muslim minority”, I have chosen to use the term “Muslim minorities”. Minority Muslims of Turkish ethnic origin are Greek native citizens, as opposed to ethnic Turks who are Turkish citizens. I have chosen to use the terms “Muslims of Turkish ethnic origin” to refer to Greek citizens of Muslim faith with Turkish ethnic identification and “Muslim Roma” to refer to Turkish-speaking, Ottoman Romanlar of Muslim faith. I often use the generic term “minority Muslim” to refer to a native Muslim with Greek citizenship status, while I indicate the ethnic and religious background when a minority Muslim comes from a specific ethnic and religious community in Western Thrace.

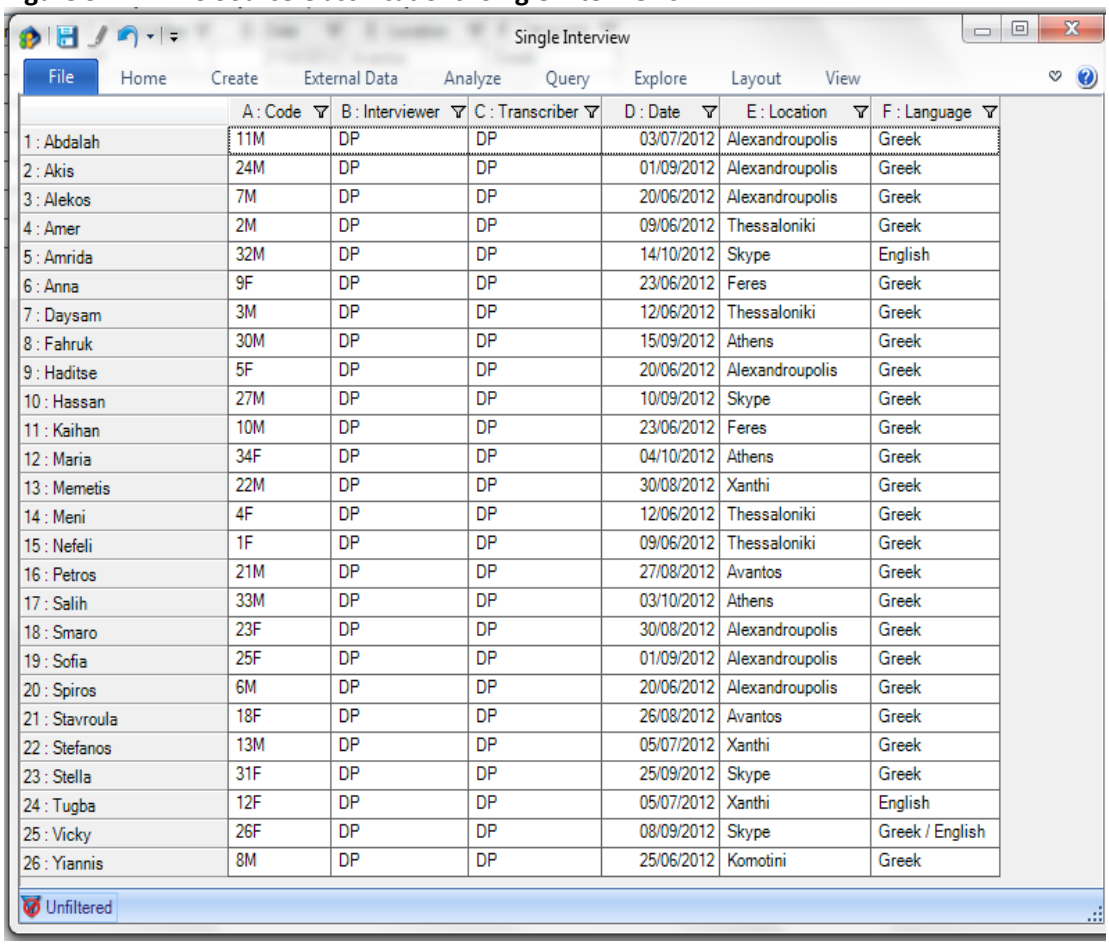
Terms are not objective; they carry within them the burden of history (Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). There is no exact word in the Greek language to translate ‘conversion’, let alone other terms such as relational, marital or affectionate conversion. Google Translate that is a widely-used free multilingual statistical machine translation service suggests five ways to translate the word ‘conversion’ into the Greek language: alteration, proselytism, proselytisation, usurpation or appropriation. Words such as proselytism or proselytisation, far from being value-neutral, are loaded inherently with the meaning and connotations of the historical era when they were formulated. The use of the word “proselyte” in the case of a religious convert obscures the most important element of conversion: the personal agency of the convert. The lack of a meaningful expression that represents “religious conversion” in the Greek language indicates

the mono-religious and mono-cultural perception of Greekness, the lack of religious choices and the centrality of Orthodoxy within the nationalistic Greek discourse. Translation forms part of the process of knowledge production. Language does not simply represent reality; language can also construct reality. The use of a non-historically negatively-laden descriptive expression to translate "religious conversion" in the Greek language can contribute to formulating and constructing a new religious landscape in twenty-first century multicultural Greece.

Similarly, participants' identities were constructed with the use of pseudonyms. Pseudonyms were carefully selected to reflect the ethnic origin and religious affiliation of participants. Muslim ethnic Turks take Muslim names but they are usually addressed with Hellenised diminutives (Clark, 2007). Memetis, a pseudonym used for a minority Muslim in Western Thrace, stands for the Turkish name *Mehmet*, the most common Turkish form of the Arabic name Muhammad, that has been Hellenised by adding the ending –is. Other examples of names of ethnic Turkish participants are Alis that stands for the name Ali adjusted to the Greek language by adding the final –s and Akis that is a diminutive form. The pseudonym used for a Muslim Roma woman, Erato was chosen humorously after a Roma character that figured in a popular TV series. The popular TV series was broadcast more than a decade ago in Greek TV channel and promoted the provocative affair between a Greek man and a Roma woman. Pseudonyms for Muslim migrants were drawn from a pool of common Arabic names. Names used for Greek participants are Christian or ancient names, either in diminutive or official form that reflect religious affiliation, social status and other background information. For example, Nefeli is a beautiful ancient name that suits a modern, educated 29 years old young woman, while Smaro is an old-fashioned name that suits a conservative religious 72 years old woman. Finally, all pseudonyms I have given to Greek converts to Islam are Christian names since no convert uses his/her Muslim name in social encounters.

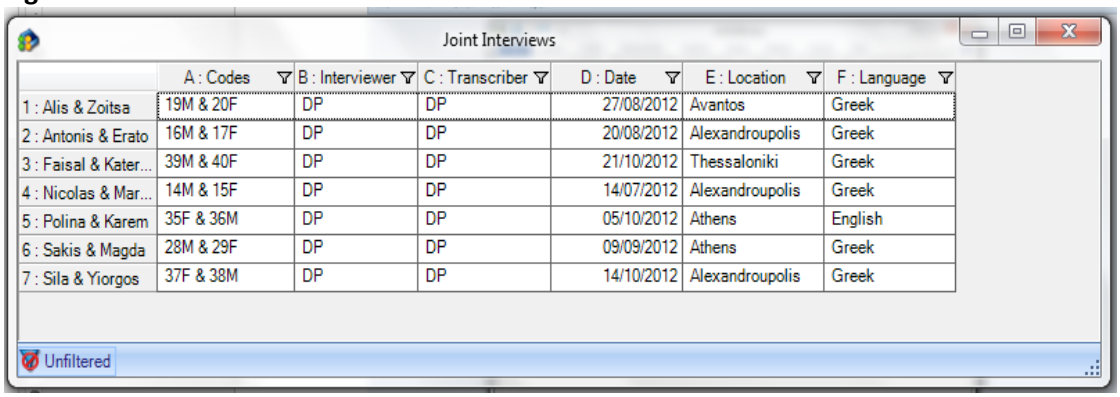
Data was imported into qualitative analysis software in the English language. The sources classifications aggregate data on single and joint interviews, as seen in figures 3.1 and 3.2 below. The attributes that were used to classify source data include: interviewee code, interviewer, transcriber, date, location and language of communication.

Figure 3.1. Nvivo Source Classifications: Single Interviews



	A : Code	B : Interviewer	C : Transcriber	D : Date	E : Location	F : Language
1 : Abdalah	11M	DP	DP	03/07/2012	Alexandroupolis	Greek
2 : Akis	24M	DP	DP	01/09/2012	Alexandroupolis	Greek
3 : Alekos	7M	DP	DP	20/06/2012	Alexandroupolis	Greek
4 : Amer	2M	DP	DP	09/06/2012	Thessaloniki	Greek
5 : Amrida	32M	DP	DP	14/10/2012	Skype	English
6 : Anna	9F	DP	DP	23/06/2012	Feres	Greek
7 : Daysam	3M	DP	DP	12/06/2012	Thessaloniki	Greek
8 : Fahruk	30M	DP	DP	15/09/2012	Athens	Greek
9 : Haditse	5F	DP	DP	20/06/2012	Alexandroupolis	Greek
10 : Hassan	27M	DP	DP	10/09/2012	Skype	Greek
11 : Kaihan	10M	DP	DP	23/06/2012	Feres	Greek
12 : Maria	34F	DP	DP	04/10/2012	Athens	Greek
13 : Memetis	22M	DP	DP	30/08/2012	Xanthi	Greek
14 : Meni	4F	DP	DP	12/06/2012	Thessaloniki	Greek
15 : Nefeli	1F	DP	DP	09/06/2012	Thessaloniki	Greek
16 : Petros	21M	DP	DP	27/08/2012	Avantos	Greek
17 : Salih	33M	DP	DP	03/10/2012	Athens	Greek
18 : Smaro	23F	DP	DP	30/08/2012	Alexandroupolis	Greek
19 : Sofia	25F	DP	DP	01/09/2012	Alexandroupolis	Greek
20 : Spiros	6M	DP	DP	20/06/2012	Alexandroupolis	Greek
21 : Stavroula	18F	DP	DP	26/08/2012	Avantos	Greek
22 : Stefanos	13M	DP	DP	05/07/2012	Xanthi	Greek
23 : Stella	31F	DP	DP	25/09/2012	Skype	Greek
24 : Tugba	12F	DP	DP	05/07/2012	Xanthi	English
25 : Vicky	26F	DP	DP	08/09/2012	Skype	Greek / English
26 : Yiannis	8M	DP	DP	25/06/2012	Komotini	Greek

Figure 3.2. NVivo Source Classifications: Joint Interviews



	A : Codes	B : Interviewer	C : Transcriber	D : Date	E : Location	F : Language
1 : Alis & Zoitsa	19M & 20F	DP	DP	27/08/2012	Avantos	Greek
2 : Antonis & Erato	16M & 17F	DP	DP	20/08/2012	Alexandroupolis	Greek
3 : Faisal & Kater...	39M & 40F	DP	DP	21/10/2012	Thessaloniki	Greek
4 : Nicolas & Mar...	14M & 15F	DP	DP	14/07/2012	Alexandroupolis	Greek
5 : Polina & Karem	35F & 36M	DP	DP	05/10/2012	Athens	English
6 : Sakis & Magda	28M & 29F	DP	DP	09/09/2012	Athens	Greek
7 : Sila & Yiorgos	37F & 38M	DP	DP	14/10/2012	Alexandroupolis	Greek

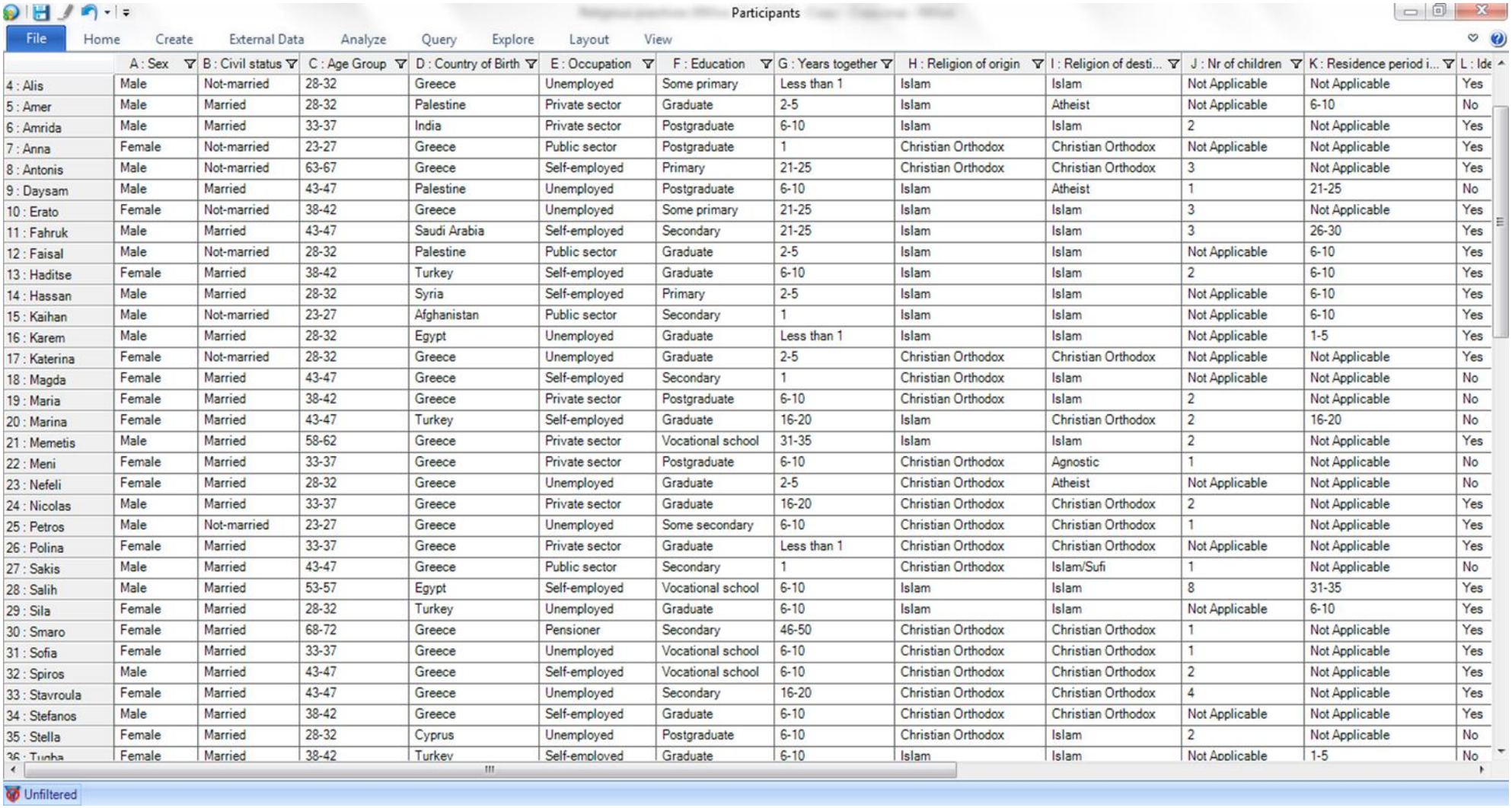
The classification of cases according to demographic attribute values is conducive to descriptive coding (Richards, 2009). Demographic data on research participants was classified in qualitative analysis software, coding the attributes that were included in the demographic questionnaire (appendix III). The attributes that were used to classify participants' nodes include: gender, civil status, age group, country of birth, occupation, education, years in a

relationship, religion of origin, religion of destination, identification with religion, number of children, residence period in Greece.

Recording the sample details includes attributes that are important for comparative analyses and for interpreting and reporting results from those analyses (Bazeley, 2013). Comparative analyses based on demographic attributes, followed by relational analyses on specific associations, contribute to identifying mechanisms between these associations. Sorting the sources according to attribute values enhances comparisons across a category or a concept and exposes similarities and contrasts within the coded material. Insightful comparisons were prompted between demographically and contextually defined groups according to age, gender, nationality and country of origin; comparisons among migrant, minority and majority populations, between religious groups or different locations of residence. The Nvivo node classifications of sample participants are presented in figure 3.3.

Data storage, management and organisation strategies make data accessible as empirical material for coding, interpretation and analytical processes.

Figure 3.3. Nvivo Node classifications: Sample participants



Participants

File | Home | Create | External Data | Analyze | Query | Explore | Layout | View

	A : Sex	B : Civil status	C : Age Group	D : Country of Birth	E : Occupation	F : Education	G : Years together	H : Religion of origin	I : Religion of desti...	J : Nr of children	K : Residence period i...	L : Ide
4 : Alis	Male	Not-married	28-32	Greece	Unemployed	Some primary	Less than 1	Islam	Islam	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Yes
5 : Amer	Male	Married	28-32	Palestine	Private sector	Graduate	2-5	Islam	Atheist	Not Applicable	6-10	No
6 : Amrida	Male	Married	33-37	India	Private sector	Postgraduate	6-10	Islam	Islam	2	Not Applicable	Yes
7 : Anna	Female	Not-married	23-27	Greece	Public sector	Postgraduate	1	Christian Orthodox	Christian Orthodox	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Yes
8 : Antonis	Male	Not-married	63-67	Greece	Self-employed	Primary	21-25	Christian Orthodox	Christian Orthodox	3	Not Applicable	Yes
9 : Daysam	Male	Married	43-47	Palestine	Unemployed	Postgraduate	6-10	Islam	Atheist	1	21-25	No
10 : Erato	Female	Not-married	38-42	Greece	Unemployed	Some primary	21-25	Islam	Islam	3	Not Applicable	Yes
11 : Fahruk	Male	Married	43-47	Saudi Arabia	Self-employed	Secondary	21-25	Islam	Islam	3	26-30	Yes
12 : Faisal	Male	Not-married	28-32	Palestine	Public sector	Graduate	2-5	Islam	Islam	Not Applicable	6-10	Yes
13 : Haditse	Female	Married	38-42	Turkey	Self-employed	Graduate	6-10	Islam	Islam	2	6-10	Yes
14 : Hassan	Male	Married	28-32	Syria	Self-employed	Primary	2-5	Islam	Islam	Not Applicable	6-10	Yes
15 : Kaihan	Male	Not-married	23-27	Afghanistan	Public sector	Secondary	1	Islam	Islam	Not Applicable	6-10	Yes
16 : Karem	Male	Married	28-32	Egypt	Unemployed	Graduate	Less than 1	Islam	Islam	Not Applicable	1-5	Yes
17 : Katerina	Female	Not-married	28-32	Greece	Unemployed	Graduate	2-5	Christian Orthodox	Christian Orthodox	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Yes
18 : Magda	Female	Married	43-47	Greece	Self-employed	Secondary	1	Christian Orthodox	Islam	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	No
19 : Maria	Female	Married	38-42	Greece	Private sector	Postgraduate	6-10	Christian Orthodox	Islam	2	Not Applicable	No
20 : Marina	Female	Married	43-47	Turkey	Self-employed	Graduate	16-20	Islam	Christian Orthodox	2	16-20	No
21 : Memetis	Male	Married	58-62	Greece	Private sector	Vocational school	31-35	Islam	Islam	2	Not Applicable	Yes
22 : Meni	Female	Married	33-37	Greece	Private sector	Postgraduate	6-10	Christian Orthodox	Agnostic	1	Not Applicable	No
23 : Nefeli	Female	Married	28-32	Greece	Unemployed	Graduate	2-5	Christian Orthodox	Atheist	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	No
24 : Nicolas	Male	Married	33-37	Greece	Private sector	Graduate	16-20	Christian Orthodox	Christian Orthodox	2	Not Applicable	Yes
25 : Petros	Male	Not-married	23-27	Greece	Unemployed	Some secondary	6-10	Christian Orthodox	Christian Orthodox	1	Not Applicable	Yes
26 : Polina	Female	Married	33-37	Greece	Private sector	Graduate	Less than 1	Christian Orthodox	Christian Orthodox	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Yes
27 : Sakis	Male	Married	43-47	Greece	Public sector	Secondary	1	Christian Orthodox	Islam/Sufi	1	Not Applicable	No
28 : Salih	Male	Married	53-57	Egypt	Self-employed	Vocational school	6-10	Islam	Islam	8	31-35	Yes
29 : Sila	Female	Married	28-32	Turkey	Unemployed	Graduate	6-10	Islam	Islam	Not Applicable	6-10	Yes
30 : Smaro	Female	Married	68-72	Greece	Pensioner	Secondary	46-50	Christian Orthodox	Christian Orthodox	1	Not Applicable	Yes
31 : Sofia	Female	Married	33-37	Greece	Unemployed	Vocational school	6-10	Christian Orthodox	Christian Orthodox	1	Not Applicable	Yes
32 : Spiros	Male	Married	43-47	Greece	Self-employed	Vocational school	6-10	Christian Orthodox	Christian Orthodox	2	Not Applicable	Yes
33 : Stavroula	Female	Married	43-47	Greece	Unemployed	Secondary	16-20	Christian Orthodox	Christian Orthodox	4	Not Applicable	Yes
34 : Stefanos	Male	Married	38-42	Greece	Self-employed	Graduate	6-10	Christian Orthodox	Christian Orthodox	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Yes
35 : Stella	Female	Married	28-32	Cyprus	Unemployed	Postgraduate	6-10	Christian Orthodox	Islam	2	Not Applicable	No
36 : Tugba	Female	Married	38-42	Turkey	Self-employed	Graduate	6-10	Islam	Islam	Not Applicable	1-5	No

Unfiltered

Sample population demographic characteristics

The sampling strategy resulted in a very diverse sample population. An aggregate table of sample participants' demographic characteristics is presented in appendix IV.

Age

The sample population is distributed across a lifespan age range from 26 to 72 years. The youngest participants interviewed were between 26 and 29 years old, while the oldest participants were between 65 and 72 years. Most couples exhibited age difference between husband and wife from one to four years, with the exception of two couples in which the husband was older by twenty five and eighteen years respectively.

Gender

Eighteen women and twenty two men were interviewed.

Table 3.2. Sample distribution according to age and gender

Age group	Female	Male	Total
23-32	6	8	14
33-42	8	5	13
43-52	3	5	8
53-62	0	2	2
63-72	1	2	3
Total	**18**	**22**	**40**

Residence

Twenty three participants were spread across the three prefectures of Western Thrace, seven participants were located in Greater Athens and Piraeus and six participants were in Thessaloniki. All four participants, who were interviewed online, were then residing in South England, Great Britain.

The residence period in Greece of Muslim immigrants in the sample ranges from 1 to 43 years, with an average of 15 years.

Table 3.3. Spatial distribution of participants

Location		No. of participants
Greater Athens		**7**
Thessaloniki		**6**
Western Thrace	Alexandroupolis	**13**
	Feres	**2**
	Avantos	**4**
	Komotini	**1**
	Xanthi	**3**
UK (online)		**4**
Total		**40**

Nationality

The participants in my study exhibit very diverse national backgrounds. Twenty six out of forty participants were Greeks (with one being Greek Cypriot), while fourteen participants came from Turkey, Palestine, Jordan, Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan and India.

Table 3.4. Distribution of participants according to nationality

Nationality	No. of participants
Greek	26
Turkish	4
Palestinian	3
Jordan	1
Egyptian	2
Syrian	1
Saudi Arabian	1
Afghan	1
Indian	1
Total	**40**

Religious affiliation, religious identification and religiosity

Although all participants were recruited to this study in terms of their institutional affiliation with Christian Orthodox religion or Islam as their religion of origin, the ways in which they

enacted their religious identity varied across a spectrum of self-identifications, beliefs and practices. In my effort to comprehend, describe and analyse multiple and complex religious identities, self-identifications and expressions of religiosity, I have discerned between the religious affiliation and the religious identification. Religious affiliation describes the affiliation with a religious institution and it may refer to the religion of origin or departure or to the religion of identification or arrival in case there has been an institutional transition.

Greeks appear over-represented in the sample population because they include all Greek citizens i.e. Christian-born Greeks and native Muslim minority members. Greek participants exhibit variation of religious affiliation and identification.

Greek participants can be discerned in four categories:

i) Fourteen Greek participants are affiliated with their religion of origin as Orthodox Christians.

ii) Three Greek participants are institutionally affiliated to Orthodox Christianity but identify themselves as atheists or agnostics.

iii) Four participants are Greek citizens - minority Muslims with varying degrees of self-identification as Muslims or affiliation with the Muslim community.

iv) Five Greek participants have officially converted to Islam.

Table 3.5. Religious affiliation and identification of research participants

Nationality	Number of participants	Religion of origin	Religion of identification	Transition type
Greek	14	Orthodox	Orthodox	
Greek	3	Orthodox	Atheist/Agnostic	Defection
Greek	4	Muslim	Muslim	
Greek	5	Orthodox	Islam	Institutional
Palestinian	2	Muslim	Atheist	Defection
Palestinian	1	Muslim	Muslim	
Turkish	3	Muslim	Muslim	
Turkish	1	Muslim	Christian	Institutional
Afghan	1	Muslim	Muslim	
Jordan	1	Muslim	Irreligious	Defection
Syrian	1	Muslim	Muslim	
Saudi Arabia	1	Muslim	Muslim	
Indian	1	Muslim	Muslim	
Egyptian	2	Muslim	Muslim	
Total	**40**			

Participants who self-identified with Islam can be described in the following ways:

i) Nine Muslim-born immigrants from the Near and Middle East (Turkey, Palestine, Jordan, Syria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia).

ii) Two Muslim-born immigrants from Asian countries (India, Afghanistan).

iii) Two Greek Muslim Roma

iv) Two Greek Muslims of Turkish ethnic origin

v) Five Greek Christian-born citizens who converted to Islam

My research sample reflects the composition of European Islam; a complex mixture of immigrants, autochthones, converts, mixed marriages and transitions from the first to the second generation in many ways unique to Islam (Allievi, 1999). Most participants were informed about religion and reflective on their religiosity. They often expressed criticism towards religious systems. Taking into consideration multiple levels of identification with religion of origin and different degrees of religiosity and practice, I have discerned participants into three analytical categories: Conventionally religious, conservative religious and secular participants.

Conventionally religious participants are identified as nominal Christians or Muslims who hold theist beliefs and engage in traditional religious practices mostly for social or family reasons. These are articulations of individuals who maintain piety and belief in "one" God and in the major Christian figures (Jesus Christ, Mother Mary and other saints), while at the same time they contest the power structures of religious institutions. Themes such as the misappropriation of religion for political purposes and exploitation or brainwashing of believers in the name of religion often emerged in the way these participants discussed religion. Conventionally religious Christians were sceptical about the Greek Orthodox Church and especially, expressed feelings of distrust and suspicion towards the Christian Orthodox clergy. For most of the moderate Christian participants, the practice of religion was seen as a social or traditional custom. Most minority Muslims of the research sample retained only nominal identification with Islamic religion and had loose adherence to religious rules and practices.

Conservative religious participants share the monotheistic perception of God with conventional religious participants. Their difference is that they use religion to organise their

lives according to the moral imperatives of a religious system. Greek converts to Islam were, also, conservative religious Muslims. Four participants had converted to Sunni Islam, while a male participant converted to Sufism. However, converts underplayed the importance to "what" Islam they had converted to as they believed that this is not so important since they are all Muslims.

Conservative religious Muslim participants professed a deeply traditional Islam and abided by strict observance of Qur'anic teaching, praying and fasting rituals. The religious identity of pious Arab and Asian Muslim participants, who come mainly from Egypt, Syria, India, Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia, appears to be solid and non-negotiable. Despite their precarious legal status as immigrants or refugees and their disadvantaged position as unskilled and low-qualified workers within the job market in Greece, Arab and Asian Muslims demonstrate solid identification with their religion of origin. Negotiation of their religious identity is not a "trade-off" for preferential treatment against policies, social status or other economic exchanges. Conservative religious Muslims, as well as Greek converts to Islam, observe strictly the Islamic dietary rules of prohibition of pork and alcohol consumption and the typical routine of five daily prayers according to ritualised Islamic practices.

Two conservative female Christian participants, a young (30) and an older woman (72), were fervent believers who professed a fixed belief in Orthodox Christian creed and non-negotiable religious practices. They also exhibited great respect for the Orthodox Christian Church and other institutions, unlike the conventionally religious Christian participants.

Secular participants exhibit a wide diversity of religious, spiritual, philosophical or political worldviews (Ecklund and Lee, 2011; Manning, 2013). Secularism is not absence of religion but a substantive philosophy of life (Manning, 2013). Conventional religious people claim a religious affiliation but can be quite indifferent to religion or even spirituality, while many "Nones" care deeply about these matters (Manning, 2013). Atheists in particular can be more passionate about metaphysical and moral questions than some religious people and may develop a life philosophy that is functionally equivalent to religion (Pasquale, 2010 as cited in Manning, 2013). Participants used a variety of names to define themselves. Some participants proclaimed themselves as atheists, agnostics, a-religious or indifferent to religion. Other participants were reluctant to categorise themselves as atheists, but considered themselves apostates from their religious communities and claimed their identity as sceptical, critical or free thinkers. There are distinct philosophical differences among people claiming to be atheist, agnostic, irreligious or sceptical about religion (Baker and Smith, 2009). Secularism is a broad

term that possibly oversimplifies the diversity of this group. However, the common feature of secular participants was that they all rejected institutionally organised religion and claimed space to organise their lifestyle beyond the moral imperatives of a religious system. Secular participants resemble conventionally religious participants in that they often engage in religious practices for non-religious reasons. However, they distinguish themselves from nominal believers in their non-theistic life perspective.

Marital status

Nineteen couples are married and five couples find themselves in non-married cohabiting relationships. The period of acquaintance of married couples varies from 8 months to 50 years. The period of acquaintance of unmarried cohabiting couples ranges from 1 year to 24 years.

Table 3.6. Marital status according to relationship type

Marital status	No. of relationships
Married	**19**
Heterogamous	*12*
Homogamous	*7*
Non-married	**5**
Heterogamous	*5*
Homogamous	*0*
Total	**24**

Regarding relationship type, seventeen relationships are mixed and seven relationships have become homogamous after conversion. I use current religious affiliation to measure relationship type that allows to identify cases of religious homogamy. Religious homogamy is evident only when current affiliation is used. All five cohabiting relationships are mixed and all seven homogamous relationships are married.

Table 3.7. Types of wedding

Wedding ceremonies	No. of relationships
Civil (in Greece & abroad)	14
Religious (Christian)	2
Religious (Islamic)	1
Both Civil & Islamic	2
Total	**19**

There is no case in my study of conversion taking place while in a cohabiting relationship. Conversion is thus perceived as a long term investment that happens in case there is evidence of a strong and stable relationship (Kalmijn et al., 2005). All mixed couples have been married with a civil wedding. In contrast, there are no civil wedding ceremonies for homogamous couples; all couples who became religiously homogamous with the purpose of getting married had religious weddings. Two couples that had gone through civil weddings became homogamous during their conjugal life.

Parenthood

Sixteen couples had children and eight couples were childless at the time the research was conducted. In homogamous families, there is a linear religious affiliation between parents and their children. Half of mixed families had institutionally affiliated their children to Orthodox Christianity, in one case the children were affiliated to Islam, while in four cases the children had no institutional religious affiliation.

Table 3.8. Religious affiliation of children born in mixed families

Relationship types	Children's affiliation	No. of cases
Heterogamous	Civil naming	4
	Christian	5
	Muslim	1
Homogamous	Christian	2
	Muslim	4
Total		**16**

Education

The educational level of the research participants varied from people who had received some elementary education to people with postgraduate and doctoral studies. Participants who had completed some primary, primary or some secondary education were mostly minority Muslim Roma or Greeks associated with minority Muslim Roma. Their representation in the research sample reflects structural factors of high percentages of illiteracy and early school leaving, insufficient knowledge of Greek language and lack of skills acquisition, vocational training or specialisation among Muslim Roma. It also confirms that Greek Christians that are related with stigmatised and socially excluded Muslim Roma in the Western Thrace region are usually deprived and low educated (Adrian Marsh, personal communication). Muslim Roma participants and their Greek partners had poor command of the Greek language. The minority

educational system is bilingual, with Turkish being the maternal language and Greek being taught as a foreign language.

More than half of the sample population has acquired graduate or postgraduate qualifications. There is an even spread among native and migrant participants.

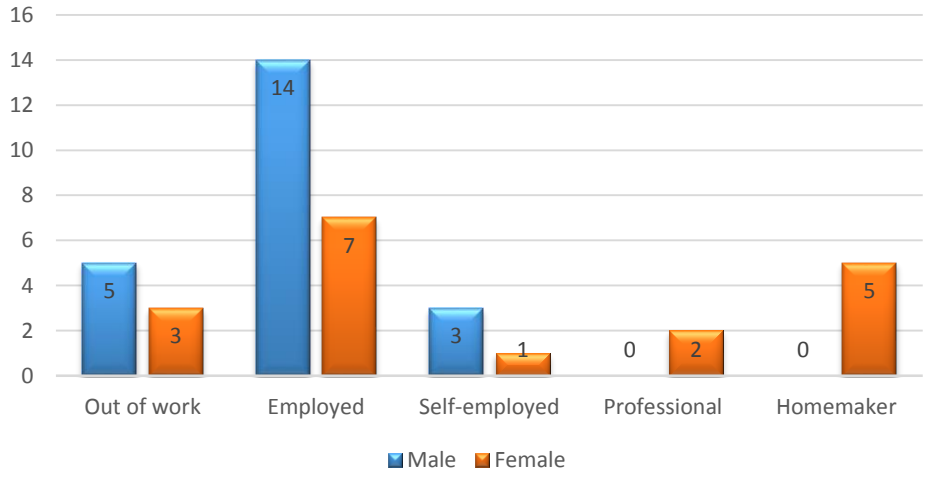
Table 3.9. Educational level of research participants

Educational Level	No. of participants
No schooling completed	5
High school graduate	6
Vocational training/diploma	5
University Graduates	18
Postgraduate studies	4
Doctoral studies	2
Total	**40**

Socioeconomic characteristics

Based on the assessment of three variables - income, education and occupation – research participants fall into the categories of low and middle socioeconomic status. Eight participants were unemployed, when research was conducted in 2012, with only three out of the eight being immigrants. Five Greek women were occupied with household duties and obligations. The structural characteristic of high unemployment rates among young university graduates in Greece is reflected upon the research sample.

Figure 3.4. Employment status per gender



Employed participants were working in the private economy sector (e.g. bus driver, butcher, car mechanic and tile setter), as civil servants in education, health and administration sectors, or were professionals (e.g. engineer, lawyer) and self-employed (e.g. restaurant owner, florist). The pattern of student migration from Arab countries who entered middle-class professions, such as medicine and engineering (Majid, 1991; Shawa, 2005) can, also, be observed. In some cases, there is a mismatch between immigrants' educational level and the type of work they perform (Lyberaki and Maroukis, 2005), even though a few migrants have achieved upward social mobility.

Data Analysis

Coding is a fundamental skill for qualitative data analysis; Coding is not an end in itself, but a purposeful step to data analysis (Bazeley, 2013; Richards, 2009). The development of the coding system is an iterative, comparative and dialectical process that presupposes a long-term engagement with data. Data analysis is the outcome of inductive and abductive systems of logic that are associated with theory-emergent approaches in qualitative research.

The development of the coding structure was initiated with line-by-line coding and microanalysis. Detailed attention to the text and exploratory thinking are essential strategies, especially at the beginning of the project, in order to gain familiarity with the scope and content of each new data source; to build a contextualised and holistic understanding of people, events and ideas being investigated and the connections within and between them; to understand the perspective of participants; to review assumptions; to further shape data gathering; to develop a framework for further analyses; and to record any reflective ideas and understandings as they are generated (Bazeley, 2013). Encoding involves interrogating the data for recurring or prominent events, happenings, actions and interactions (Bazeley, 2007; Richards, 2009).

The initial phase of coding resulted in the creation of almost one hundred parent and child nodes that was rather excessive slicing up and fracturing of my data. I created "in vivo nodes", using words or phrases used by participants as labels for codes, to capture the essence of what the participants said in their own terms. Some examples of "in vivo nodes" are: "they are not even aware of their own religion", "everyone has the right to choose", "Which doesn't really mean changing, you only differentiate a few things in your life", "a Muslim among Christians", "Greece is a Christian country", "Because we live here", "the stupid cousin", "love and respect wins" and "a way out... abroad". In this exploratory coding phase, labelling and naming of codes remained at

descriptive, improvised, topical and unstructured level. However, review of coding indicated that there was considerable overlap between nodes and redundant replication of the same concepts and ideas. Each node was broken down in each possible nuance and variation. Node “religiosity”, for example, was broken down into eight child nodes, including non-practicing Muslims / Christians, practicing Muslims / Christians, apostates, non-believers, converts, impact of the Greek context on religiosity etc. This fragmentation and slicing up of data proved inefficient and impractical, which led to review in the second phase of the coding process.

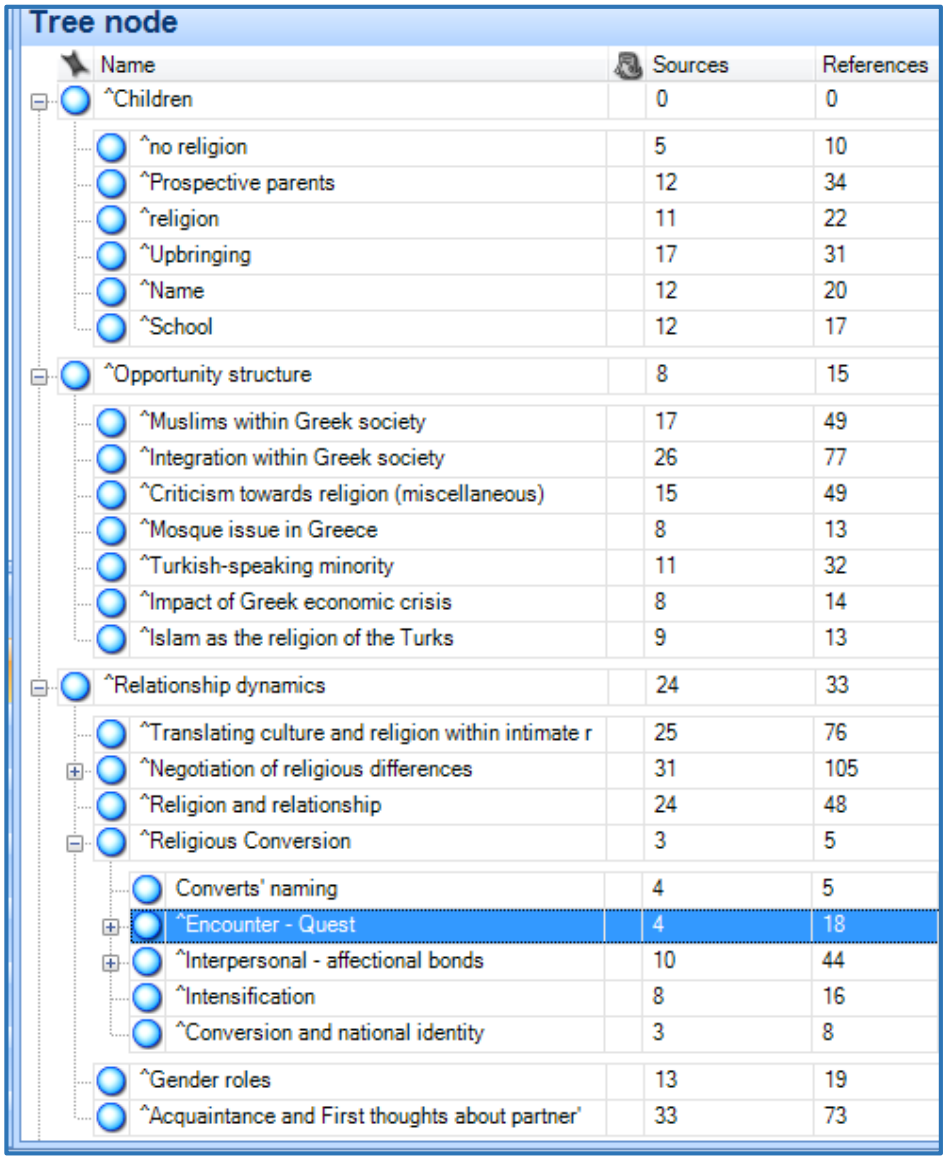
The second phase of the coding process started with sorting free nodes out and connecting both existing and new nodes into the branching system of a two or three level tree node structure (Flick, 2009). Subcategories were linked to categories along the lines of their properties by answering questions such as “when, where, who, why, how” (Bazeley, 2007). The analytical focus shifts from description of events, actions and properties of source data towards categorisation and conceptualisation. Conceptualisation is an analytic process of labelling, naming, reducing data and elaborating categories in terms of their properties and dimensions (Miles and Huberman, 2013). The analytical steps include developing substantial codes, naming and classifying the phenomenon and concepts; explaining and defining the content of codes and categories; organising and grouping data together; categorising properties and dimensions; generating concepts for nodes and discovering relationships among concepts.

A more cohesive coding structure started emerging, compared to the initial free and in vivo coding structure. It had slightly reduced number of nodes, from one hundred to eighty five nodes. The main parent nodes that now made up the coding structure, were “opportunity structure”; “dimensions of religion” that was broken down in the child nodes: moral, institutional, political and social; “relationship dynamics” that brought together multi-level negotiations of religious differences, negotiations of practices, negotiations of religious affiliations of children; “practices” (prayer, fast, dressing, eating, holidays, weddings); “interactions” (couple and the family, couple and society, children and society); and “religiosity”. Theoretical concepts like gender roles, identity, perceptions of culture, life meaning construction emerged at a certain level of theoretical abstraction. Review of the conceptualisation, categorisation and classification in the coding process revealed the yet incomplete nature of theoretical abstraction. For example, gender roles, perceptions of culture or life meaning construction were inadequate meanings to support the analysis of multiple ethnic, cultural and religious mixedness. The need for the identification of themes and ideas that would encompass the data led to thematic coding.

Thematic coding involves a level of conceptual and theoretical abstraction and the construction of theoretically informed themes or codes. Thematic codes are called metacodes or pattern codes that reflect either overarching ideas or higher order concepts, or identify broader, more complex themes running through the data (Bazeley, 2013; Flick, 2009). Combining coded categories into higher order focused codes helped me move forward to conceive the thesis structure and analyse theoretical conceptions and statements. The number of nodes was now considerably reduced and amounted to fifty six. I chose the overarching themes that informed the structure of the thesis. “Parenting” became a single overarching theme under which negotiations about religious, cultural and ethnic transmissions to children in mixed faith background, name conferral strategies and management of identity and children’s positionality in Greek society were grouped. The node “relationship dynamics” included negotiations of differences and how couples translated their differences into meaningful significations in their relationships. All practices and festivities, together with wedding ceremonies were grouped under the node “religious practices” and the node “interactions” included family and societal reactions to exogamy. Two other nodes “opportunity structure” and “religiosity” informed analysis and indicated the main themes that had to be addressed in laying out the legal, political and social context in which this research was contained (e.g. Muslims in Greek society, the Turkish-speaking minority, impact of economic crisis, Islam as the religion of the Turks etc.). The node “religiosity” informed many comparisons across religious and ethnic lines and practicing or non-practicing divides.

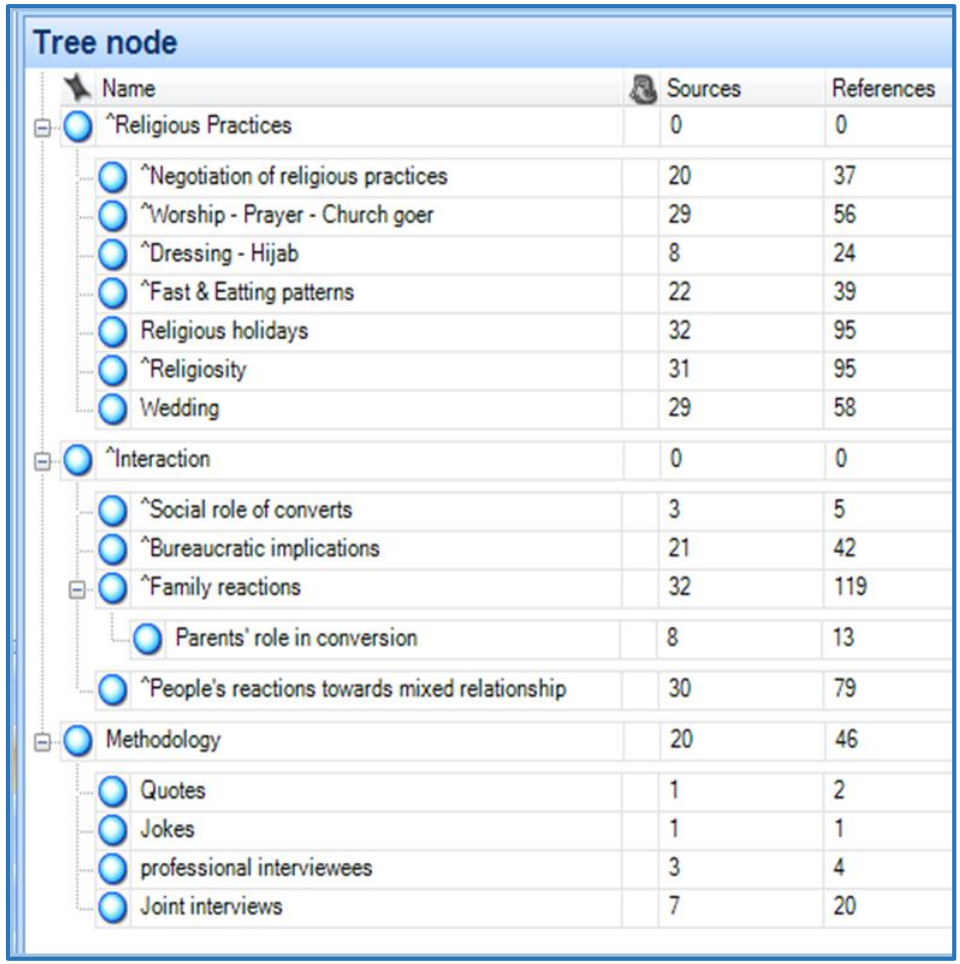
The end result of the coding system for my research project is set out in its current form in figure 3.5.

Figure 3.5. Coding structure Nvivo10 (Parent – children level of coding)



Tree node

Name	Sources	References
^Children	0	0
^no religion	5	10
^Prospective parents	12	34
^religion	11	22
^Upbringing	17	31
^Name	12	20
^School	12	17
^Opportunity structure	8	15
^Muslims within Greek society	17	49
^Integration within Greek society	26	77
^Criticism towards religion (miscellaneous)	15	49
^Mosque issue in Greece	8	13
^Turkish-speaking minority	11	32
^Impact of Greek economic crisis	8	14
^Islam as the religion of the Turks	9	13
^Relationship dynamics	24	33
^Translating culture and religion within intimate r	25	76
^Negotiation of religious differences	31	105
^Religion and relationship	24	48
^Religious Conversion	3	5
Converts' naming	4	5
^Encounter - Quest	4	18
^Interpersonal - affectional bonds	10	44
^Intensification	8	16
^Conversion and national identity	3	8
^Gender roles	13	19
^Acquaintance and First thoughts about partner'	33	73



Tree node

Name	Sources	References
^Religious Practices	0	0
^Negotiation of religious practices	20	37
^Worship - Prayer - Church goer	29	56
^Dressing - Hijab	8	24
^Fast & Eatting patterns	22	39
Religious holidays	32	95
^Religiosity	31	95
Wedding	29	58
^Interaction	0	0
^Social role of converts	3	5
^Bureaucratic implications	21	42
^Family reactions	32	119
Parents' role in conversion	8	13
^People's reactions towards mixed relationship	30	79
Methodology	20	46
Quotes	1	2
Jokes	1	1
professional interviewees	3	4
Joint interviews	7	20

Description of thematic codes and categories identified in the data provides a useful starting point for developing a report of findings and analytical writing. Effective analysis requires using data to build a comprehensive, contextualised and integrated understanding or theoretical model of what has been found, with an argument drawn from across the data that establishes the conclusions (Bazeley, 2007). The intension and extension of the dimensional structure of a theoretical concept have important ramifications for the selection of cases or quotes that instantiate the concept (Bazeley, 2013). Qualitative coding is about data retention, rather than data reduction (Richards, 2009).

Coding represented the operations by which data is broken down, conceptualised and put back together in new ways (Flick, 2009). During the initial open coding process, data is broken up, fractured and removed from the interview context. The research context is lost, data is re-contextualised and a new analytical framework is created. Synthesising and re-contextualising data is a highly innovative and resourceful process that allows seeing data anew through the category rather than through the case of the document (Richards, 2009). This process allowed me to see new patterns of association across the data and shift my analytical focus from sources to codes or from cases to categories, themes, concepts, ideas and theory. Coded data was brought together under analytical categories and formed a different 'text' than the interview transcripts.

Re-contextualisation of data has generated multiple and complex comparisons and contrasts between concepts and perspectives; expressions and silences; within and among source cases; and between cases and theory or empirical research. Comparative analysis contributed to identifying similarities and contradictions and evaluating their consequences for the theoretical model. Deviant cases enrich the analysis by indicating the need to expand patterns of understandings and explanations.

To retain consistency in dealing with differing data collection methods, particular attention should be paid to the context (Morris, 2001:563). I focused on the individual, rather than on the couple, as the unit of analysis, while taking into account the relationship dynamics, the migration context and gender roles to understand the essence of their experience. The researcher, who interviews two participants in a conjugal relationship, is called to compose a shared picture making sense of overlaps, contradictions, discrepancies and use of interpretations and build an account of how the couple accommodates, negotiates and sometimes conceals those differences, not necessarily as problematic, but as part of the everyday texture of the relationship (Hertz, 1995).

Describing the context and bringing different populations into a meaningful whole can be challenging. For example, some Greek women in my sample were very upset about the way their families treated their Muslim husband and got into detailed descriptions about their families' disapproval of their conjugal choices. Unlike the Greek wives, Muslim husbands were reserved and cautious of the information they provided, presenting mild accounts of family reactions or even talking exuberantly about how well received they felt by their families-in-law. This tension in data can be interpreted by different understandings of respect towards the family in Arab societies compared with Greek society, different management of expectations, contrasting perspectives or experiences attributed to gender, migration or even, different understandings of what is allowed to talk in public, especially about personal and family issues.

Data analysis is a free-flowing, creative procedure generating constant comparisons across the cases, multiple lenses to look at the data and a flow of thoughts. Revisiting text coded at a category and reviewing coding can be highly analytical (Richards, 2009). The process of coded data review includes the steps of revisiting categories, reading, thinking and reflecting on them analytically to assess the context, 'uncoding' misfit data and refining the content. When reading, thinking and reflecting led to the emergence of new analytical categories, old data was revisited and "coded-on" (Bazeley, 2007; Richards, 2009). The recursive nature of analysis means that different phases of coding (initial, intermediate and advanced) occur both concurrently and iteratively (Bazeley, 2013). Even at advanced stages of analytical writing, it was sometimes necessary to revisit data and return to initial open coding techniques to extend or clarify an issue on analysis. Reflecting on emergent themes and recording thoughts in memo are important to keep track of these data analysis iterations.

Other procedures such as memoing, annotating data and linking ideas, creating visual representations to show how key categories and concepts relate to each other, text searches and matrix coding queries are part of the analytic procedure (Bringer et al., 2006). These procedures of managing, locating, identifying, labelling, shifting, sorting and querying data were facilitated by the computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS). Nvivo software supports inclusive and exhaustive code-and-retrieve operations, removes much of the drudgery from coding and speeds up the procedure, freeing up large amounts of energy for thinking about meaning of data and reflecting on particular ideas (Bazeley, 2007; Seale, 2010; Weitzman, 2003). However, the consistency of data analysis depends on the researcher's analytical and organisational skills; CAQDAS can facilitate the procedure but will not do the analysis (see also Kelle, 2004; Weitzman, 2003). Refining the coding structure in Nvivo can easily turn into an end in itself that is disassociated from the analytical purpose; that is what Lyn Richards (2009) called "the coding trap".

Data analysis, interpretation and retention are processes that commence with fieldwork and are completed with analytical writing. When the coding system is concluded, analytical writing becomes another skill to master. Research as an analytical, interpretative and intellectual process is inseparable from life experiences. Apart from vigorous, valid and reliable research methods, there are intellectual analytical skills and capacities such as liveliness, inquisitiveness, curiosity, imagination and inspiration that are invaluable to enhancing research quality.

Analytical writing is presented in the following four empirical data chapters. In the first empirical chapter, I analyse family formation process in Christian - Muslim mixed relationships in Greece on an empirical, thematic and sequential itinerary from the acquaintance of partners and their awakenings towards mixedness through their understandings of inequalities, divides and opportunities to family formation and family dissent. The second empirical chapter focuses on religious negotiations as a process of identity shifts between Christian and Muslim partners in mixed relationships and how these negotiations are put into practice in the reintegrated mixed family context and religious identities are actively enacted, performed and contested in festive encounters between the mixed couple and the extended family. In the third empirical chapter, I follow mixed families to the childrearing phase of family formation and I explore strategies of cultural, ethnic and religious transmissions to children, parenting and child-naming. The last empirical chapter places mixed Christian-Muslim families within specific socioeconomic contexts in crisis-ridden Greece, as well as within multiple transnational and translocal social and family fields that link together mixed nationality relationship migrants' societies of origin and settlement and addresses questions of integration and precariousness.

Chapter 4

Mixed relationships: From intimacy to family formation

In chapter 4, I will follow intermarriage on an iterative process from “pre-conjugal socialisation” (Santelli and Collet, 2012), opportunities, preferences and concerns towards family formation. Family formation is a messy and often nonlinear process (Flowerdew and Al-Hamad, 2004). My intention is to present migratory and non-migratory paths to conjugal mixedness and family formation processes in mixed relationships both chronologically and thematically. The purpose is to explore how immigrant and native Muslims who originate from different ethnic, cultural and racial backgrounds meet and create intimate relationships with their Greek Christian partners. Concerns over religious differences, political and historical divides and social inequalities are accommodated within the intimate relationship through mediation until the relationship becomes an integrated experience.

Gender roles and Christian and Muslim families’ reactions to exogamy will also impact on the process. Relationships with kin and intimate others are not always harmonious or supportive and questions about the balance of priorities and needs are not always agreed upon or easily accommodated (Mason, 2004). The decision to intermarry by non-conformance to the matrimonial practices of the ethnic or religious group of origin, is known to cause intra-family tensions, misunderstandings and discord (Santelli and Collet, 2012). The reconciliation of the families initiates a process through which transnational family relationships are created, developed, established and reproduced through intermarriage and across the borders.

Trajectories to intimacy

In this section, I am going to introduce the study participants focusing on the social conditions that facilitated the acquaintance of partners and the structural opportunities for intermarriage. Interrelationships are seen as sets of considerations, constraints, opportunities, coincidences and serendipity (Mason, 2004). Participants' narratives demonstrated the significance of context, contingency, constraint and opportunity over abstract marital strategies. Successful matches were the result of multiple trajectories and marital strategies. Four types have been

identified in the formation of mixed Christian – Muslim families in Greece: i) family formation abroad that initiated migration of the mixed couple to Greece, ii) temporary or transient migration to Greece for education or travel purposes turned into permanent migration through family formation, iii) post-migration family formation, iv) intermarriage between minority and majority, ethnic and religious, communities without migration.

Two common family formation trajectories were initiated as a secondary effect of the reason of going abroad. In the first trajectory, Greek citizens brought in a partner they had met while abroad for work or study (Kofman, 2004). Some couples met at the university while studying abroad (e.g. in Italy, in Bulgaria or in the United Kingdom) and decided to settle in Greece. Stella, a Greek-Cypriot met Amrida, an Indian Muslim, while studying at a British university and they lived together for many years in Great Britain before deciding to move to Cyprus. Yiannis was a teacher in a Greek school in Istanbul on a short-term contract when he met his Turkish wife and decided to relocate together to Western Thrace.

In the second trajectory, transient or short-term young migrants motivated by a mixture of broader educational goals and pleasure-seeking tourism or travel have been acquainted with Greeks. Haditse, a Turkish Muslim woman, was on short-term vacations visiting friends in Greece when she met her Greek husband, Spiros. Their decision to get married and form a family initiated her migration experience. In other cases, Palestinians Amer, Daysam and Faisal and Jordanian, Abdalah migrated to Greece to study engineering or medicine. Sila, a Turkish woman met her future husband, Giorgos, while she was on a student exchange programme in Athens. The impact of European Union student exchange programmes, such as Erasmus and Socrates, on the increase of youth mobility and intermarriages has been well documented (Gaspar, 2008; 2009; King, 2002). In the above-mentioned cases, temporary migration for educational or travel purposes was transformed into permanent migration through family formation decision.

Another migratory path to intermarriage is family formation with the majority ethnic population enhancing the integration of permanent or undocumented migrants and asylum-seekers (Waldis and Byron, 2006). Marriages between refugees, asylum-seekers and other undocumented or permanent migrants and Greek citizens result from post-migration relationships which may be intercultural, interethnic and/or interreligious. To mention but one example of a permanent migrant, Salih is an Egyptian Muslim who has lived in Greece for more than four decades, he has become a Greek citizen and he has eight children from two marriages with Greek women. According to Williams (2012:24), the formal, citizenship or residency status will impact qualitatively on the cross-border marriage experience of migrants

who share a secure status in their country of residence. The precarious status of refugees and asylum-seekers impacts on their family formation decisions, as we will analytically see later about non-married relationships.

The last trajectory of Christian - Muslim family formation involves intermarriage between majority and minority, ethnic and religious communities without migration being involved. These are the cases of intermarriage between Greek citizens of Christian Orthodox religion and native Muslims of Turkish ethnic or Turkish Roma background. The story of Memetis, who originates from a Muslim minority community in Western Thrace, is of particular interest. Memetis recollects observing the social and economic inequalities between Greek Christians and minority Muslims who suffered constraints due to lack of education, strict observance of traditional norms and conservative patriarchal roles. Memetis escaped the conditions that prevailed in the Muslim minority communities when he moved to Thessaloniki in the early 1970s to train at a vocational school and met his Greek Christian wife who also grew up in the same locality in Western Thrace. Memetis, said:

> *"These were difficult times. We met in Thessaloniki and that's where everything progressed. If I were here in [Western Thrace], I don't think we would have met... it was physically impossible."*

Developing his own family values based on dialogue, equal distribution of household responsibilities and equal gender roles, made Memetis an ideal candidate for challenging the traditional norms of Muslim minority communities through intermarriage with a Greek Christian. Education acquires salience in these translocal marriages as a socioeconomic factor of rural-to-urban migration or as an opportunity of expansion in the social networks and increase of the social capital of minority Muslims.

A dilemma that a social researcher may face when trying to describe intimate relationships is either to emphasise the divides based on nationality, ethnicity, culture, religion, citizenship status or race that may lead marriages to be classified as heterogamous, mixed or intermarriages or to describe far less tangible connections that invoke what Bourdieu (1990:71) has described as *"the spontaneous affinity experienced as a feeling of friendly warmth which brings together the agents endowed with dispositions or tastes that are similar".* Coincidences or serendipity that generated instantaneous predilection and spontaneous attraction and initiated the family formation process have also formed participants' narratives. Maria, a Greek convert to Islam, recalls being impressed by the engagement of her Egyptian husband, Salih, with political and religious activism, a common passion that they both share. Polina, a Greek

Christian who met her Egyptian husband, Karem when he asked her about street directions outside the tube station, refers to fate and serendipity. Polina said: *"I believe in fate and especially when I met him, I felt sure that there is God!"* The serendipitous origin of the relationship that forms part of the couple's past is reconstructed in a transcendent perspective (Robinson et al., 2010).

Collegiality, friendship and courtship lead to intimacy and family formation. The choice of partners is constrained by the opportunities people have to meet and interact with others (Kalmijn, 1998; Kalmijn and Flap, 2001). Pre-conjugal socialisation (Santelli and Collet, 2012) in peer groups at universities, workplaces, neighbourhoods, social networks and voluntary associations indicates the structural opportunities within Greek society for intermarriage. Despite various religious, ethnic or cultural backgrounds, common socioeconomic and education characteristics, professional activity, political ideologies and micro-social environments help shape common affinities and common social networks.

Awakenings towards mixedness

The pre-conjugal socialisation, acquaintance and intimacy that are initiated by migratory and non-migratory paths are gradually followed by the awakening towards mixedness. My purpose is to present key themes that have emerged in the participants' narratives to which I shall keep returning to in the analysis.

The salience of social inequalities and divides increases as the intimate relationship progresses towards family formation. The perception of practical issues is awakened over time when the relationship moves forward, as Amer, a young Palestinian atheist explains:

> *"In the beginning, it's more that you like the person, love, simple stuff. As you move forward, you start thinking of the details..."*

Stella, a Greek-Cypriot convert to Islam who had been friends with her prospective husband, Amrida, an Indian Muslim, long before they got into the intimate relationship, said:

> "*We had never discussed about religion when we were friends. We just wanted to be together, we didn't think the consequences in detail. The issue of religion came when we had to reach a decision on what we would do in the future. Of course you have some things to discuss and at the end of the day religion does play a role."*

Amrida, the Indian Muslim husband, recalls how the decision to get married provoked and intensified discussions about religion:

> *"There was some discussion when we decided to get married. When the whole family got involved we woke up from our sleep and we realised that there are some other things to think about in real life. Many points were brought to us… many arguments were brought to us from our families so then we had to talk. We had to talk where to take the relationship now and like most of the people in the world end up getting married or split up. We decided to get married. And on that stage we discussed".*

The process of family formation in conjugal mixedness assesses and appraises "the oscillation between the external and the internal vision of mixedness" (Collet, 2015). The partners must decide where they stand with regard to the representations that affect them most intimately, thus making their initial, social inequality easier to bear (Collet, 2015). The process of re-interpretation of historical and religious representations in the context of mixed relationships is evident in the case of Spiros, a Greek Christian, whose transformation from a "fanatical" nationalist into a humanist, owing to his Turkish wife's influence, allowed him not only to "bear" historical and religious divides, but to celebrate Greek Christian - Turkish Muslim conjugal mixedness.

> *"In the beginning it was very difficult… very difficult. I was the one who wouldn't go to Turkey not to give even a cent to the Turkish economy. And I see now, how wrong I was… As you understand that there are no differences and that people are the same and the need for a deity, for a God is the same…I want to say that my wife helped me very much to change and see those things 'with different eyes'. I can say that I was fanatic. You will wonder how a fanatic ended up taking the decision to marry a Muslim. He ended up...I crossed to the other side. And my wife didn't force me to do that by insisting; on the way I realised that things are different."*

Akis, a minority Muslim of Turkish ethnic origin had so intense concerns about how he would be perceived by his partner and her family that he decided to hide his religion from his partner. Even though, he does not identify with his religion of origin and he is disaffiliated from the minority Muslim communities, he definitely expected that different religious affiliations would complicate the relationship. Disclosing his religion of birth after the intimate relationship was established, he avoided being judged according to stereotypical assumptions about Muslim

minority members. His eagerness to apostate from his ethnic origin, a feeling that he had internalised since his childhood, the use of a diminutive form of his name, a nickname that concealed his ethnic origin, his willingness to blend into the dominant society and to lead a life as any 'normal' Greek citizen made him adjust his behaviour to the social stigma (Goffman, 1963). During our interview encounter, Akis expressed repeatedly the anguish of concealing his religious identity and his eagerness to be integrated within Greek society.

Partners must decide not only where they stand with regard to the representations, but also to identify the primary social signifier that affects them most intimately between the external and the internal vision of mixedness (Collet, 2015). The salience of religion for the organisation of intimate relationships differs significantly from one relationship to another. Religious discourse in conjugal mixedness is contingent on ethnic, cultural and ideological significations. The overemphasis on the formalistic binary Christian and Muslim may obscure other social signifiers, such as ethnicity, political and historical divides or race. Nationality and collective memory is a historically loaded issue within Greek – Turkish couples (Petronoti, 2006; Petronoti and Papagaroufali, 2006). In the following incident, that Tugba narrates laughingly, we see how nationalist identifications and divides can be transposed into a couple's routine life.

> *"We discuss mostly politics not religion. Sometimes when we are fighting generally at home if I want to make him very angry, I say some things that get him very angry and it's about politics. But if he wants to make me angry, very angry he says 'Kurdistan' and I'm saying to him 'Macedonia'. Now we really like these battles [laughing]".*

In the longstanding cohabiting relationship of Antonis, a Greek Christian with Erato, a Roma Muslim, the prime social signifier that affects them most intimately is race. Antonis said: *"It's not about religion… It's mostly about the race."* Social inequalities and the effects of the 'othering' process emerged on the grounds of stigmatisation attached to race and minoritisation. Minority Muslims saw prejudice as the basis of discrimination directed against them from the dominant society, and in doing so they were reproducing the image of their stigmatised identity (Evergeti, 2011).

Notions of 'boundary', 'ethnic group' and 'Other' describe the peripheralisation felt by incomers and ignore the sometimes celebratory aspects of interethnic marriage (Kohn, 1998). It has been discussed in the literature how intermarriage offers opportunities to migrants who have developed certain preferences. Since Tugba was a young girl, she used to say that she will never marry a Turkish man because she wanted to escape the asphyxiating control of family

and small community: *"I used to prepare my mind before the marriage and I did it".* In her 'cartographies of desire' (Constable, 2005), a foreign spouse was more desirable than a Turkish spouse. Sila, Turkish, also commented on the opportunities provided by intercultural intimacy and characterised nationality and religion as "illusions".

> *"I believe that nationality, religion and colour are illusions. These are the things that our parents gave to us and it is not our character. It is our character somehow, nationalities are our culture somehow but if you find love or if you find friendship in another nationality, more than a person from your country, you must go for it!"*

Acculturation is an original, fascinating and enriching experience to many participants. A relationship is an itinerary into the partner's culture, mentality, religion and country-specific traditions and habits. Participants repeatedly refer to the geographical proximity and cultural similarities between Greece, Turkey and the Arab countries with emphasis on people, mentality, culture, traditional customs, weather, Mediterranean cuisine and music. Many Greek participants who are married to Muslim partners or have converted to Islam are ambivalent about the extent to which Greece belongs culturally and intellectually to the West and to the European Union (Herzfeld, 1989). I think that intermarriage offered the opportunity to these participants to enact the "Orientalist" aspects of their identities.

Personal experiences, positive representations of other people or of the 'Other' religion, pleasant childhood memories are interpreted retrospectively, sustaining the viability of the intimate relationship on a process of diversifying the Other, "de-othering" or translating the Other into familiar own categorisations. Experience of "mixedness" restores ideas and opinions based on a-historical and de-contextualised stereotypes about the 'Other'. Some partners volunteered to read the Qur'an "to see what it says" and "to be able to answer to people". Mixed relationships are a learning process and knowledge empowers the partners to confront people's reactions that are based on stereotypes, ignorance, generalisations and negative representations of Muslim people in the Greek society. Stefanos, Greek Christian, expressed that knowledge on religion derived from lived experience differs from theoretical knowledge.

> *"I like reading in general about religions, but it is one thing to read and how they write, because everybody writes his opinion and it is another thing to experience it. It is a totally different experience. For me this is the real experience [smiling]… How it is, beyond books. You enrich yourself, you acquire a personal opinion. I think that I personally have more right opinion about what happens on religion."*

The articulation of religious views, the freedom and confidence of expression is co-constructed in a dynamic way between the partners grounded on the specific relationship. The partner allows for confidence to express one's opinion through dialogue and exchanges, setting boundaries and limitations. According to Faisal, a Palestinian Muslim, living with a person of different ethnic, religious and cultural background becomes an integrated experience:

> *"From a point and after, you don't think about it anymore, it becomes everyday life... and, of course, you gain. I'm telling you if the relationship has strong roots, it makes you progress in thought and in spirit. So you come closer to other cultures, other religions if you want to come. This… if you want… so little-by-little you erase disputes and differences and you replace them with common points. The more you know about your religion, the closer you come to the common points with other religions. When you don't know, you will find only differences and you will only plunge into disagreements about other religions."*

Awakenings towards mixedness entail the intensification of the salience of social inequalities based on religious, historical and nationalistic divides and of stigmatised identities due to race and minoritisation processes, as well as celebratory aspects of intermarriage. The mediation and re-interpretation of religious, ethnic and racial representations in the context of mixed relationships is an important stage in the family formation process.

Family formation

In this section, I discuss wedding types in married relationships, symbolic Greek - Turkish weddings and impediments to intermarriage in non-married, cohabiting relationships. I shall analyse how participants have come up with a wide range of practices offered to them in transnational religious, legal and cultural fields in their effort to overcome the constraints of the Greek legislation and sanctions of the Greek Orthodox Church on intermarriage.

Mixed Christian – Muslim marriages in Greece are regulated according to the religious rules of intermarriage of the Eastern Orthodox Church of Greece, the Greek Civil Code and the Sharia law and traditions in the Muslim minorities of Western Thrace. The Greek state sets the structural requirements of intermarriage through legislation. Before 1982, marriages between people of different religions were not possible within the Greek legal system. The Greek Civil Code was amended in 1982 (Law 1250/1982) to include a system of choice between the religious and civil wedding that resolved the acute social and legal problems that were caused

by the exclusiveness of the religious wedding. The Greek Orthodox Church does not sanctify marriage between an Orthodox Christian and a person of different religion (Jews, Muslims, etc.) or a heterodox Christian who has not been baptised in the name of the Holy Trinity, unless the person of the different religion converts to the Orthodox Christian religion in an official manner by accepting a Trinitarian Baptism. In Islam, marriage is considered as a contract between a man and a woman to live as husband and wife. A formal binding contract that outlines the rights and responsibilities of the conjugal partners is considered integral to a religiously valid Islamic marriage. In Islamic tradition, marriage is permitted to a Muslim man with a “virtuous” or a chaste woman of “the People of the Book”. The Qur’anic verse does not refer to the possibility of giving Muslim women in marriage to scriptuary men, but this possibility is firmly and unanimously rejected in the books of Islamic tradition and law (Friedmann, 2003).

Weddings are rites of passage through the family's developmental phases (Turner, 1969; Van Gennep, 1960; Viere, 2001; Wolin and Bennett, 1984). Apart from the religious elements of the marriage rite, the ceremonial ritual and the social significations differ considerably between the Islamic and the Christian Orthodox religious systems, notwithstanding the national and local variations within the Islamic and Christian world. Individuals have in their possession different “tools in the toolbox” according to their legal status as Greek citizens or Greek citizens from the Muslim minority communities, immigrants or refugees and their religious identities as devout or nominal Christians or Muslims.

Married relationships: Weddings

Until the amendment of the Greek Civil Law in 1982, Greece had been the only country in Europe, and one of the few in the world, that had established the religious wedding as the sole type of marriage (Aggalopoulou, 2006). As a result, marriage between two people of different religions was not possible. The christening of the heterodox partner and the solemnisation of the Christian wedding sacrament was the only viable strategy for the circumvention of religious and legal restrictions in Christian - Muslim couples. Smaro, an old devout Christian woman, who got married to a minority Muslim of Turkish ethnic origin in the 1960s, in what was a turbulent and even hostile historical period in Greek - Turkish diplomatic relationships, describes how her husband's christening and their wedding ceremony took place secretly under the protection of police forces against the will of their families.

"If he weren't christened, there could be no wedding. First, he had to be baptised and then, the sacrament of marriage. We got married secretly... with the police outside. What do you think... just like that? At the baptism as well! So that nobody finds out! So that they don't enter inside the church and... we were afraid that maybe our parents will find out and act violently."

Facing the same legal constraints and religious sanctions in the pre-1982 order, some participants followed a different course of action. Memetis as a minority Muslim could have resorted to the Sharia Law that was enforced in the Western Thrace region under the Treaty of Lausanne (1923) and safeguarded by the Mufti. However, this was not an option. Memetis had promised his future wife and his in-laws that "each one will remain where one is" and he firmly believed that the wedding should be regulated according to civil law. Relying on their social networks located in West Europe, Memetis and his wife overcame the institutional obstacles by having a civil wedding ceremony officiated in a West European country. It should be noted that this marriage was valid only according to the Civil Code of the country where it was conducted and despite being legally non-existent in Greece, it was morally fulfilling for the couple. A similar strategy was followed by Abdalah from Jordan, who travelled with his wife to the Middle East, where they solemnised a civil wedding. These civil weddings that were solemnised abroad, according to the laws of the respective country, were recognised in Greece, subsequently to the amendment of the Greek Civil law. Individuals living in transnational or translocal social fields are embedded in multiple legal and political institutions and experience multiple loci and layers of power (Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004). Being shaped by multiple legal, political and religious institutions, may offer multiple choices to individuals who utilise these possibilities by acting upon them.

Following the enforcement of a system of choice between religious and civil wedding in 1982, all mixed couples in the sample were married with a civil ceremony. Some participants expressed that by performing a civil wedding, they felt that they let down the expectations of the Christian family for a traditional religious wedding. Polina, a Greek Christian, said: *"All my family, all the people I know would like us to get married in the Church... and I would like to get married in the Church".* Complaints and disappointment that are provoked by the disruption of traditional wedding customs are, also, expressed by the Muslim family.

Choices concerning wedding ceremonies and the identifications and compromises they might require are often indicators of the faith negotiations of the future relationship, even if at the time, for many couples, the practical goal of getting married is uppermost (Al-Yousuf, 2006). According to Robinson et al. (2010), within the wedding ceremonial ritual, whether civil or

ecclesiastical, people in a sense review their past and reconstruct their lives. Even though, the Greek family's wish for a Christian marital sacrament may initiate discussions about the religious conversion of the Muslim partner to Christianity, the negotiating power of the Greek family seems rather impotent to impose it and a civil wedding ceremony takes place. On the contrary, in some cases of conservative Muslims, Islamic weddings without legal binding force preceded the civil wedding for reasons of complying with the Islamic ethical principal of chastity and the Islamic prohibition of premarital relationships. When the wives had not already converted to Islam, the consolidation of Islamic wedding was the precursor of the conversions that followed within the first two or three years of conjugal life.

A wedding can be the means of facilitation of bureaucratic procedures for the acquisition or renewal of residence permits for immigrants and refugees and avoidance of time-consuming bureaucratic procedures. Asylum seekers often have to be creative in order to devise mechanisms to resolve what asylum policies have failed to do (Petronoti, 2007). Hassan, a Syrian Muslim, recalls eloquently and laughingly his experience of imprisonment, following an incident with a police officer, regarding an alleged violation of a traffic rule that actually led to his recognition as political asylum seeker that permitted him to get married.

> *"We wanted to get married, we wanted to do our papers... but the papers were ruled out as fake. The lawyers said they couldn't do anything... This prison solved all of our problems [laughing]. Yes, seriously I'm telling you, it solved for us all the problems in our life because we had a lawyer, he got me out as political asylum seeker, I got a red card and we got married with this card* [laughing]."

'Refugee marriages' are heavily scrutinised by policy-makers and immigration officials in the countries of settlement as they are often viewed, and stereotyped, as being purely strategic arrangements made to circumvent immigration control (Williams, 2010). However, there is evidence that 'bogus' marriages happen. In a follow-up meeting that took place eighteen months after I had concluded field work, Polina informed me that she had recently divorced from her Egyptian Muslim husband. Polina, who as we have seen, attributed her acquaintance to her Egyptian husband to serendipity, complained that she had fallen victim to an unreliable migrant husband, who strategically exploited marriage as a migration opportunity and radically changed attitude towards her once his right to remain in the European Union was obtained. Polina was left feeling distressed from the divorce procedure and felt exploited as a "European Union visa victim".

The solemnisation of religious ceremony offers the same opportunities for the acquisition of residence permit for immigrants as the civil wedding based on the equivalence of these two types of wedding in the Greek legal system. The adamant denial of Marina's Turkish family to consent to her wedding to a Greek Christian urged her to utilise the opportunity of acquisition of a residence permit through the tactic of christening and solemnisation of a Christian wedding. As her husband, Nicos, Greek Christian, explains:

> *"Greece being the only country in Europe in which a religious wedding bears equal legalisation with the civil wedding and because my parents-in-law wouldn't send her documents in order to do a civil wedding, the Archbishop suggested on his own that he will authorise a religious wedding; my wife was catechised and baptised and we then got married within 21 days".*

Conversion proved as a viable strategic solution for the circumvention of the 'sanction' posed by the Turkish family through the "utilisation" of the discretion of religious authorities that operate mainly at local level. The procedural nature of conversion facilitates bureaucratic procedures by engineering at individual level what migration and asylum policies in Greece cannot solve (Petronoti, 2007).

Migration opens up the possibility for transnational migrants to draw upon conflicting moral principles and incongruent legal systems. The polygynous marriage of Salih to two Greek women offers an example. Prior to travelling to the Middle East and having a civil wedding ceremony with Maria, Salih had informed his first wife about his intentions to take a second wife.

> *"I told my first wife that I will get married. And I could keep her because she lived in Egypt. In the beginning she agreed but after a year she asked for a divorce. I didn't give her a divorce easily in case she'd change her mind, but once she hired a lawyer to file for divorce, I gave it to her".*

In some Muslim countries, the first wife is allowed to petition for divorce if a second marriage occurs without her permission (Yamani, 1998). While polygamy is not prohibited according to the Islamic Sacred Law, the Greek civil law establishes the principle of monogamy. Even though polygamy is an offence in the Greek legal system, Salih's polygynous marriage is "legitimised" morally and ethically by the tolerance and consent of the second wife. Maria, a Greek who converted to Islam during matrimony, accepts polygynous marriages as part of the Islamic faith system and Egyptian culture, while the first wife filed for divorce. These polygynous marriages

reflect different religious, social and cultural assumptions about gendered opportunities created in transnational context.

Symbolic Greek - Turkish Weddings

Mixed couples often choose to perform wedding ceremonies in both countries of origin. Wedding ceremonies that take place in the country of origin of the migrant partner contribute to the familiarisation of the Greek partner with local traditions and customs and incorporate the Greek family into the local moral system of obligation and reciprocity. Apart from fulfilling the wishes of the individuals and their families to experience a "normal" wedding ceremony according to local customs and traditions "with a white dress and with everything", the wedding ceremony also legitimises the marriage in the local community. Sila explained that, *"in Turkey if you say "I had a civil wedding in Greece" they won't believe it; they must see the wedding..."* Involvement in a transnational moral economy may be re-intensified when reaching the life-stage of marriage and reproduction, when there is often an increased interest in family connection and cultural roots (Wise and Velayutham, 2008).

Strong symbolisms act at transnational wedding ceremonies. Two Turkish Mayors together with a Greek Municipality Councillor acted as witnesses at the wedding ceremony of Sila and Giorgos that took place in Turkey. Thus, the Greek - Turkish marital union symbolises a "political union" between Greece and Turkey as sealed by the friendliness and neighbourliness expressed by the political representatives of the two states.

The Greek - Turkish wedding ceremony of Stefanos and Tugba that took place in Anatolia was rife with curiosity, gossip and misunderstandings. Some two hundred fifty relatives, old friends of the Turkish family and Greek guests, who arrived in a hired bus, were invited to attend the wedding ceremony taking place in a hotel. Tugba describes the reactions to the wedding ceremony:

> *"All the Turkish people are so curious that they looked at our family as if they look at aliens [laughing]. We were the only people who made a wedding with a Greek person in the depths of Anatolia. It's the first time they see a wedding with a Greek because you know how they teach in the school about the Greeks and also here [in Greece] about the Turks... We played Turkish music, we played also Greek music, we played zeibekiko, but nothing religious, it was just a party..."*

The curious village 'gaze' at the wedding event is followed by gossip from close relatives. Gossip, according to Gluckman (1963:313) is “generally enjoyed by people about others with whom they are in a close social relationship”. Tugba narrates:

> *"My father’s relatives came to the engagement and they spoke very silly things, like circumcision, if he will get Muslim... His father who can understand Turkish heard everything. And it was a little bit of a problem... my cousin said it... for me it doesn’t matter because they are stupid so I don’t pay any attention to them... they came also to the wedding because they were curious. But after the wedding they did very big gossip [laughing] so now we are not talking to them."*

The request to convert comes in many cases from distant relatives within the extended family environment. The relatives in the role of “mediators” between the family core context and wider society propagate the benefits of conversion. The groom's father who originated from Western Thrace and had learned to understand the Turkish language listened to the conversation of the Turkish relatives about sensitive issues, such as conversion and circumcision. Erving Goffman (1959) in “The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life” analysed the embarrassing situations that can be caused when 'destructive information' is revealed at each other's front. In his discussion of the social process of endogamy, Goffman (1959:161) writes:

> *"The nature of colleagueship allows us to understand something about the important social process of endogamy, whereby a family of one class, caste, occupation, religion, or ethnicity tends to restrict its marriage ties to families of the same status. Persons who are brought together by affinal ties are brought to a position from which they can see behind each other's front; this is always embarrassing but it is less embarrassing if the newcomers backstage have themselves been maintaining the same kind of show and have been privy to the same destructive information. A misalliance is something that brings backstage and into the team someone who should be kept outside or at least in the audience."*

Gossip and “destructive information” were not only restricted within local family networks of close relatives but were extended at national level through the coverage by Turkish media. Tugba and Stefanos resisted the persistent invitations to participate in TV shows in Turkish media, but did not escape the misrepresentation in the newspapers. The journalists talked to some bus drivers, who were invited to attend the wedding ceremony. The bus drivers, who operate in the regular transport connections between Istanbul, (Turkish) Eastern Thrace and

(Greek) Western Thrace, claimed for themselves a role in the "transnational romance". Tugba recalls laughingly:

> *"They wrote everything falsely. Everything! They wrote his name incorrectly and they wrote that we met in a bus between Turkey and Greece. Only my name was true".*

It may be helpful to consider the degree to which marriages represent or embody the social logics, as well as the social practices and traditions of the group. It is important to get behind the outward instrumental features of marriage practice that may imply tradition and cultural continuity. Traditional practices have power to transform unorthodox marriages into orthodox ones (Wise and Velayutham, 2008), but their use may or may not signify cultural continuity.

Non-married relationships

The cases of cohabiting non-married couples in the population under study offer insight to the obstacles raised to intermarriage by the bureaucratic mechanism, religious institutions and family systems. I am going to present each case of cohabiting non-married couple separately as they tend to differ significantly from each other.

Bureaucratic mechanisms and immigration policies often prove irrational and pose insurmountable difficulties. Bureaucratic obstacles posed by immigration policies proved insurmountable in the case of Kaihan, a young Afghan asylum-seeker in a cohabiting relationship with Anna, a Greek Christian. Kaihan who fled Afghanistan at the age of 16, was requested by the Greek authorities to submit some additional documents for the authorisation of marriage permit. However, since in Greece there is not any Embassy or Consular office of Afghanistan, Kaihan would have to travel to the closest Afghan Embassy which is in the capital of Bulgaria. According to Kaihan, *"being an asylum-seeker means that I am not allowed to exit Greece, therefore it is not possible to get married."* The scrutinisation of the private life of refugees, asylum-seekers and undocumented immigrants (Williams, 2010; Yuval-Davis et al., 2005) is accentuated by the irrationality and inefficiency of the Greek bureaucratic mechanism. In addition to the bureaucratic impediments, Anna referred to the family reactions to her decision to get married to an Afghan asylum-seeker that led to rupture in her relationships with her family and also contributed to postponing the wedding process.

Antonis, a Greek who has been in a long-term cohabitation with a Muslim Roma, Erato and has acquired three children out of wedlock, claimed that they were denied by the municipality authorities the permission to have a civil wedding on the grounds of religious difference in the beginning of the 1990s. I further investigated with the municipal authorities the participant's denunciation of discriminatory treatment. The Director of the Municipality Registry Office disputed the validity of the statement in clear racist and discriminatory language and attributed the rejection of issuance of marriage licence to non-compliance with legal requirements e.g. failure to submit a certificate of celibacy or a divorce act from a previous wedding. The low education level, the insufficient knowledge of Greek language and ignorance of their civil rights as Greek citizens make Muslim Roma vulnerable in the face of discriminatory and racist treatment by the Greek state authorities.

Another case of a cohabiting non-married Greek Christian – Muslim Roma couple was initiated with elopement or "bride abduction". The local custom of "bride abduction" makes part of the repertoire of the cultural system of Muslim settlements in Western Thrace (Avdikos, 2000; Imam and Tsakiridi, 2003; Liapis, 2006). Petros, a Greek Christian, describes that his Muslim Roma partner was about to get married on the following day prior to the elopement. Abducting "somebody else's woman" could not remain unavenged and "troubles, fights and quarrels" with the bride's family followed. The objections of the Muslim Roma family to female exogamy are overridden when the "prerogative of chastity" is annulled. In compliance with the patriarchal gender roles, it is then considered that the woman "belongs to her man" and the relationships with the bridal family are restored. Petros has established in the Muslim settlement at his in-laws' (matrilocal settlement). Being orphaned at young age, he possesses low social capital and makes part of a restricted social network. The couple's long-term cohabitation and the birth of their child out of wedlock challenges the dominant perceptions and indicates that a modernisation discourse is articulated at a slow but progressively accelerating pace in the Muslim communities of Western Thrace (Zaimakis and Kaprani, 2005).

The last long-term cohabitation case concerns a conservative religious couple, Palestinian Muslim, Faisal and Greek Christian, Katerina. During the joint interview with Faisal and Katerina, I often had the feeling that discussing their religious differences was a delicate "face work" (Goffman, 1967) and the couples' negotiations about the religious or civil type of wedding or the religion of any children that might be born out of this marriage had "come to a dead end". While for a devout Muslim, the wedding can be seen as a civil contract, for a devout Greek Christian marriage may signify a religious sacrament. Consenting to a civil wedding is experienced as a compromise by Katerina, who will have to renounce the sacramental blessing of her marital union. Katerina replied to my persistent interrogating:

> *"I guess practical issues come up in case a couple decides to marry… Since we haven't thought about a wedding and children, there is no such issue. Maybe if we think about it and we put this in the middle, it may cause a problem to our relationship. But in case that marriage comes up, then this will be a serious issue. If you decide to move on, this is a problem that the couple has to solve".*

Even though sharing a similar level of religiosity, understanding the salience of religion for their intimate relationship and acting based on consistent moral values creates a strong basis for negotiation of common approaches across religious lines, I think that in the case of Faisal and Katerina, their inflexible commitment to their religious affiliations has been an impediment to progressing with their relationship from cohabitation to marital status. They oscillated between the external and internal vision of mixedness and had not decided where they stood with regard to representations that affected them most intimately and would force them to "compromise" as a couple and as individuals (Collet, 2015).

The presentation of non-married cohabiting relationships has offered insight to the impediments to intermarriage. Factors that lead to resistance to intermarriage include the precarious legal status of undocumented immigrants, refugees and asylum-seekers, the anticipation of family reactions and the irrational, inefficient, preferential and discriminatory Greek bureaucratic mechanism. Another theme that has emerged is the inflexibility of approaches that may be caused by the strong identification with the religion of origin and high degree of religiosity. Nevertheless, the legitimacy of cohabiting relationships should also be seen as an outcome of the weakening control of family and religious institutions and a process of modernisation of the traditional family in Greek society and more importantly in the Muslim minority communities.

In this section, I have discussed a wide range of 'rites of passage' that draw on multiple possibilities offered by national, legal, cultural, religious and moral systems. In the pre-1982 Greek legal order, these included cases of legal ecclesiastical weddings at a Christian Orthodox Church with conversion of the Muslim partner to Christianity and civil weddings abroad in Western European or Middle Eastern countries that were legally non-existent in Greece. The amendment of the Greek civil law in 1982 resolved some of the issues concerning mixed relationships. However, the observance of traditional ecclesiastical wedding and other traditional wedding customs are safeguarded both by the Greek Christian and Muslim family accordingly. Weddings facilitate bureaucratic procedures for the acquisition or renewal of residence permits as far as immigrants and refugees are concerned. There is evidence of 'bogus' marriages and instrumental conversions to Christianity that were conducted with the

sole purpose of acquisition of residence permit. Islamic wedding ceremonies and a case of polygynous marriage are legally invalid in Greece, but, nevertheless are 'legitimised' ethically and morally within the Islamic religious system. The custom of 'bride abduction' is 'legitimised' within the cultural system of Muslim Roma communities.

I will now turn my analytical focus to how Christian and Muslim families' reactions to exogamy impact on the family formation process.

Family dissent and reconciliation

Family reactions to intermarriage can vary from mild or ambivalent to dramatic and finally, rejecting reactions. Parents may have ambivalent feelings, but accept the union for the sake of their children's happiness and in order to preserve family unity; or alternatively, they may refuse to recognise the couple, which can end in conflict and breaking relations off with the family (Santelli and Collet, 2012). Parental concerns are mostly overcome at the early stages of family formation process. In case of mild reactions, the Greek family shows tolerance and permissiveness that allows for overcoming the traditional political, historical and social divides. Some dramatic parental performances bore no power to hinder and interrupt the mixed union in the cases under study. Thus, the family did not exercise any power to influence the decision for the sake of family unity.

Parental concerns are various and complex. Religion is the main, but not the sole source of parental concerns. Intermarriage is criticised as a social choice and not necessarily only as a religious choice. Parents are concerned about gender roles in Islam, the female positionality in the intra-household structure, monogamy in the Islamic faith system and safety, especially when the Muslim partner comes from a warfare zone. Greek parents are negatively predisposed towards the influence that the Muslim partner may exert over religious beliefs, redefinition of religious identifications and conversion to Islam. This leads most female converts to hide their conversion from their parents.

The rejecting reaction of the Greek family, friendly and social environment to female exogamy is explained by the violation of the principle of hypergamy that requires the woman to improve her socioeconomic status through marrying into an equal or more prestigious social group. It is more difficult for a woman than for a man in a mixed couple to obtain parental acknowledgement of the union (Santelli and Collet, 2012). Parents express concerns over the socioeconomic and other demographic characteristics of the Muslim migrant or minority

partner, such as the level of spoken language, employment opportunities, considerable age difference or the precarious legal status of the Muslim migrant. It is considered that the principle of hypergamy is violated when the Greek woman is getting married to a man with low professional skills, a foreigner who does not speak the Greek language fluently or an immigrant who does not possess a permanent residence permit.

Nationality is still a powerful political and historical divide, especially in the cases of Greek-Turkish couples. Most of the Turkish families' reactions to the female exogamy were mild which can be justified based on their secular and military background, with the exception of the acute and dramatic reaction of the Turkish family to Marina's exogamy. The marriage of Turkish Marina to her Greek husband, Nicos and her conversion to Christianity provoked the acute and dramatic reaction of her Turkish family that led to the disruption of any communication and contact with her family of origin at least during the first years of their marriage. Her father's reaction was so dramatic that he even resorted to violence. Marina explains that her father objected to her ethnic exogamy.

> *"My father had said that he would not allow this wedding. He was adamant, he didn't want it in any case… He was not concerned with religion… He didn't want me to marry a foreigner. One extra reason that he is Greek. He doesn't think this way now, but it was something extraordinary then, 16 years ago it was extraordinary".*

Some years passed before the relationship with her parents was restored. Marina bemoans that her relationships with her parents "are never as they would be if she had married a Turk". However, she felt "free" and empowered to have a family with "the man of her choice" and more self-fulfilled than if she were with a man of the same nationality. Her exogamous choice corresponded to her desired lifestyle, but she did not want to break off her cultural and family origins (Santelli and Collet, 2012).

Reactions of the Muslim family to male exogamy are generally mild, because of the lack of religious sanction or prohibition to a Muslim man getting married to a Christian woman and prevailing patriarchal gender roles in Islam. There is respect for the male decision to choose his own wife. Even though in some Muslim societies, traditional customs and social expectations still entail that the Muslim family will choose a bride for their son, Muslim migrants seem to have broken away from traditional expectations. Marriage may be seen by the Muslim family as an integration opportunity for the migrant son. Alternatively, migration turning into permanent settlement through marriage provokes resistance to the detachment from culture,

suspicion towards the European other and fear that the offspring will be cut off from Arabic culture and language. Vicky, a Greek convert, describes that her Syrian Muslim family-in-law were very suspicious of her conversion to Islam and sceptical about her being an educated, highly-skilled European woman.

> *"They were very-very sceptical about [the conversion]. They thought that "she kind of tries to ease things up". They were happy but they were sceptical at the same time. They were not like "ohhh great!" Because they have got the perception that she is European, she is educated, she is more… Because the way they see the role of the wife in their culture is very different from the way we see the role of the wife as Greeks. In my husband's family, the wife should be a very good housewife, a very good cook, a very good mother occupied only with the upbringing of the children. I'm the complete opposite of all these. Not that I'm a bad housewife, but my house is not my priority. My priority is my career".*

Mixed marriages, in which cultural distance, religious conversion and female exogamy coincided, caused tensions and disruption of family relations. Reactions appear to be stronger when there are some congruent elements such as contestation of cultural gaps (e.g. in the cases of exogamy with Asian Muslims), nationalistic divides (e.g. in the cases of Greek - Turkish relationships), religious conversion, mostly of Greek women to Islam and female exogamy. One such example is the case of Stella, Greek Cypriot convert to Islam, whose decision to marry Amrida, an Indian Muslim, resulted in temporary disruption in her relationships with her family. The wedding took place in Great Britain, where the couple resided at the time this research took place, in a close circle of friends, while parents and siblings did not attend. Amrida describes his feelings about the wedding:

> *"In a typical marriage people are happy, they are planning their wedding 2-3 years in advance and no religions are involved. For us it was very different… we did not have any of our relatives at the wedding, just a couple of friends"*.

According to Amrida, the tension resulted from extreme emotional reaction of the Greek Cypriot family regarding the importance that society attributes to religion and it was not based on real knowledge about religions. Religion *"even in the 21st century puts the family name to shame"*. On the contrary, Stella was well received by the Indian Muslim family. The decision to get married with an Asian Muslim "broke the ties" with her family, friends and social circles. Amrida, an Indian Muslim, narrates:

"Her father was very upset… very-very upset. The family was very upset… her brother took it very personally, how this thing could have happened? They did not give me the benefit of being a human being. They only thought of me as a person from a different part of the world with different religion and that's it. This is how extreme it was… so quite threatening sometimes… after that quite dry".

The conflict and subsequent rupture of relationships within the extended family provoke tension, emotions of discomfort and sorrow of separation as well as the converts' exorbitant efforts for self-understanding through cultural and religious re-significations. Conversion, that takes place with the purpose of marrying out, causes religious disaffiliation and often, provokes rupture in family and community ties. Consequently, this jeopardises the marital security and the "comfort zone" that offers material and emotional security to family members. The emotional upheaval that was caused as a result of friction in the family relationships impacted on the degree of connection of the conjugal couple.

The disruption of relationships lasted for a few years before they were gradually restored, especially after the birth of their first child. Stella never talked openly to her parents about her conversion to Islam, but they have come to understand that their grandchildren are not going to be christened. Stella said:

"I'd like them to know it, but I don't feel ready yet because we have now reached a very good level of communication, we are reconnected as a family. Since my daughter came they changed… They don't want to cause us trouble because they are afraid that they won't see the baby… But my husband respects my family so much that he would never deprive them of their grandchildren just because they caused us trouble. But for the time being we are alright… We just don't discuss religious matters when we are together… So I simply avoid it out of fear to jeopardise this relationship that we have now tried to build."

The disruption of family relationships is usually only temporary. Family relationships that have been disrupted are progressively restored. Family members approach each other again and the parents get to know the religious and ethnic diverse partner. The issues that caused the rupture, disappointment and frustration are left aside. Respect towards the family is appreciated in Islam and perceived as a common cultural value between the Greek and Arabic culture and Muslim traditions, in general. Muslim partners, in particular, take a very realistic approach towards family relationships and consider joy, disagreement and conflicts as part of the family life. The birth of grandchildren often provides an opportunity for reconciliation

(Santelli and Collet, 2012), rapprochement and reunion of the families. The reconciliation and rapprochement of the families is bound to initiate a process of creation and establishment of transnational kinship relationships.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I followed mixed relationships between Christian and Muslim partners in Greece on an iterative journey from migratory and non-migratory trajectories, "pre-conjugal socialisation" (Santelli and Collet, 2012) and structural opportunities that initiate intimacy, through family formation processes, and towards the development of extended family relationships. Despite religious, ethnic and cultural differentiations, pre-conjugal socialisation indicates the structural opportunities within Greek society for intermarriage. Dispositions and tastes, preferences and opportunities, challenges and impediments, serendipity or marital strategies initiate awakenings towards mixedness. Mixed couples are called to mediate differing religious, ethnic, cultural and racial representations until the relationship is transformed into an integrated experience. The mediation and re-interpretation of religious, ethnic and racial representations in the context of mixed relationships is an important stage in the family formation process.

Intermarriage offers a wide array of possibilities and symbolisms operating within transnational legal, political, cultural, religious and moral systems. The precarious legal status of undocumented immigrants, refugees or asylum-seekers, the anticipation of family reactions, migration policies, as well as social stigma, social exclusion and minoritisation processes are identified as impediments to intermarriage. Solid identification with institutional religion and high degree of religiosity may lead to inflexible approaches and rejection of mixture. Christian and Muslim families' reactions to exogamy are contingent upon the extent to which intermarriage challenges these religious, cultural, national and moral systems.

In the next chapter, I am shifting my analytical focus to how Christian and Muslim couples negotiate, mediate and re-interpret their religious differences during the family formation process and how participants put their thoughts, ideas and negotiations into practice.

Chapter 5

Negotiations and practices

Intermarriage initiates a process of identity shifts between Christian and Muslim partners in a mixed relationship that ends up in negotiations of religious differences. The purpose of discussing approaches towards religious differences is to build a substantive understanding of the salience of religion for the organisation of intimate relationships around worldviews and religious beliefs. The word 'negotiation' is used to indicate a level of discussion, dialogue, exchange and mediation within the intimate relationship. There is evidence that reflective individuals are talking through their differences. Tuning in to each other's ideas is crucial and there are signs of attempts to 'manage relationships via negotiation' (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 1995).

While the previous chapter discussed the family formation process in Christian – Muslim couples in Greece, the aim of this chapter is to shed light on how immigrant and native Muslim partners negotiate religious worldviews and identity shifts in mixed marriages. This chapter also examines how intermarriage affects and transforms diverse religious, social and cultural practices that characterise the ordinary and festive family life with focus on interactional, contextual and practical factors. I rely on theories of "every day" or "lived religion" (Ammerman, 2007; Hall, 1997; Jeldtoft, 2011; McGuire, 2008; Winchester, 2008) to discuss how people actually put their worldviews into practice and how religion is incorporated into family life. First, I focus on negotiations of religious differences in mixed and homogamous families. Then, I begin to consider how religious practices and cultural traditions are reconfigured in mixed relationships as part of everyday practices, festive family celebrations and encounters with the extended families.

Interreligious modes of conjugal adjustment

Religious identities are situational and are actively constructed and contested through social relationships and interactions in specific structural contexts (Ryan, 2013a). Stone (1962, as

cited in Ajrouch and Kusow, 2007) proposed that identity is not a property of individuals but of social relationships. Christian and Muslim partners negotiate and co-construct their religious identities within translocal or transnational networks of social relationships. The question "to convert or not to convert" articulates to large extent binary oppositions between the continuation of inherited religion vs. the right to negotiate religious identity.

Negotiating religious mixedness

Conventionally religious and secular partners find themselves in mixed relationships and devise strategies to contest bureaucratic impediments, patriarchal hierarchies and long-established traditions. Religious negotiations are resolved within the mixed couple through secular arrangements of civil wedding and other administrative and legal provisions. They share a monotheistic perception of God and common moral basis and ethical principles. The monotheistic perception of the unique and indivisible nature of God / Allah is seen as considerable affinities in both religions stemming from Abrahamic tradition (Alba et al., 2009). According to Derrida (1998), the Testamentary and Koranic revelations are inseparable from the historicity of Revelation. Even though the theological contest regarding the human nature of Jesus Christ in Islam or the theistic nature of Jesus Christ in Christianity is substantial, a mutual level of respect in mixed relationships allows Christian and Muslim partners to approach Divinity abiding by the moral principles as defined by each one's religion.

Religious conversion from Islam to Christianity has emerged as a subject of negotiation in mixed couples between Greeks and their partners, in their majority, Muslim minority women of Turkish ethnic origin or Muslim women of Turkish nationality. The gender preference reflects the structural characteristics of religious exogamy, since when Greek men marry women from Muslim countries, there is a high probability to marry women of Turkish nationality. Transition within monotheistic religions is seen by conventionally religious partners as a typical procedure that would not invoke any inner transformation of self with any major impact on a person's spirituality. Tugba, a Turkish "lazy" Muslim as she characterised herself said:

> *"I believe in God more than Islam or more than any religion. So it would be just a procedure for me, but I would still be the same person. I will always think the Muslim way."*

The existence of the possibility, the "could be" or the easiness of phrasing *"it doesn't matter at all, I believe there is one God"* calls upon the necessity of discerning between faith as distinct

from the institution of religion or religious affiliation as not identifiable with religiosity. For conventional Muslim participants, the monotheistic perception of God and the faith to "one and the same" God stands as a higher value than abiding by to a specific religion. At the same time, the procedural nature of transition from one religion to the other without major implications for a person's belief system informs us on the instrumentality of religion in its social practical usage.

Despite conversion being treated as an instrumental procedure without major implications for a person's belief system, contradictory narratives reveal the tensions, the internal agony and ambiguity that participants experienced when they contemplated conversion. Contemplation of religious transition makes participants waver between internally contradictory statements such as *"that would change everything"* and as Haditse, Turkish said: *"nothing would change basically but it was not possible to change my name".* Taking on a Christian name through conversion is considered a change of the core identity with considerable implications in the social interactions of the Muslim partner within the Greek society. There is a void of theological essence and religious justification of conversion that can be expressed either as lack of fulfilment or as inefficient 'solution' or it may provoke tensions within internalised religious beliefs.

It is exactly this instrumentality, the disenchantment of religion and the "cynicism" involved in the performativity of religious conversion without divine transcendentalism that is criticised, resisted and opposed to by the Greek partners. Arguments against religious conversion invoke the typicality of the procedure and the lack of any theological essence. Stefanos, the Greek Christian husband of Tugba, said: *"I know that even if she is baptised, she will be Christian only on paper; I know that it is clearly typical".* It is the awareness of the typicality of the procedure and the lack of any theological essence that makes Stefanos say: *"I don't really like it when a person changes religion; I consider it betrayal."* The perception of Self through the protection of solid identity and the respect towards inherited traditional systems appear as conflicting to the right of redefinition of religious identity in late modernity that converts to Islam claim for themselves. Alekos, a Greek Christian said: *"I believe that a person should remain the way she was born. For me it's not right".* Participants who oppose conversion perceive religious conversion as rupture to the continuity of the biographical Self (Mansson McGinty, 2006) and the religious and social fabric.

The conceptual void left by the lack of theological essence of conversion to Orthodox Christianity can be filled up by political significations that confirm and reassure the hegemonic

position of Christian Orthodox religion in the Greek context. Yiannis, a Greek participant who self-identified as agnostic says:

> *"I find it quite hypocritical, a fact that could be exploited in the narrow or wide environment of the other person… Look we changed her, we made her our own… Acceptance of the other person after repentance and penitence, is something that doesn't charm me. Namely, an integration that doesn't have to do with the essential position of the other person, inwardly they all understand what's going on, but from a position that the other person succumbed to it, we have her in hand. This is the rationale that disturbs me"*.

In Greek - Turkish couples, religious homogamy may be exploited to "compensate" for historically loaded and politically controversial ethnic exogamy. The specific Greek - Turkish couples break the rules of endogamy while at the same time, they negotiate recognition (Petronoti and Papagaroufali, 2006) and preserve Muslim faith as a token of Turkish identity. There is a certain suspicion expressed by partners in mixed relationships whether the intentions are benign when conversion takes place in the context of a marriage. Participants point out the importance of respect, acceptance and tolerance of religious differences and lack of any imposition of dominant religious views.

Regarding the relationships between Greek Christian and minority Muslims, we should take into account their equal status as Greek citizens and the minoritisation of Greek Muslims as a result of discrimination, social exclusion and limited access to social, economic and power resources (Trubeta, 2003). Recognition of inequalities needs to be part of the dialogic process; it is hard, if not impossible, for un-equals to dialogue equally (Plummer, 2005). With the elimination of the legal impediment to intermarriage on the grounds of religion with the Civil Law amendment in 1982, the "negotiation power" between the Greek Christian and minority Muslim partners is balanced. As Memetis, a Muslim of Turkish ethnic origin said: *"Neither did they ask me [to convert] nor did I ask"*. The social status and gender role as a Greek Christian male cohabiting with a Roma Muslim woman gave to Antonis power to determine the religion of the family, but as he said: *"I didn't impose on her and I didn't care essentially"*. The minority Muslim family that is characterised by ostentatious religiosity, inferior social status and patriarchal gender roles does not express any intentions to assimilate religiously diverse spouses.

Negotiations along the binary "Christian – Muslim" fail to explain the multiple, complicated and sometimes overlapping strategies of meaning-making processes that participants

negotiate in their daily routine. Giorgos, a Greek Christian who is married to Sila, a Turkish Muslim, said:

> *"This issue cannot be solved this way. It's not that you change your religion and you are done with it. Nationality and religion are almost identical. These two go together."*

The change of religion is not considered as a viable solution to their ethnic and cultural diversity or as a strategy of mediation of their cultural and national divides. Even if religious conversion "resolves" religious diversity, it does not "compensate for" ethnic and cultural or racial diversity that need to be negotiated separately.

Negotiation of conversion has not led to institutional transition as it is not professed as functional and viable strategy of mediation of interpersonal relationships for conventionally religious partners. In the context of mixed relationships exchanges regarding religious views and religiosity did not have so strong impact as to lead to re-negotiations and new constructions of religious identities comparing to homogamous relationships. Mixed couples organise their lifestyle beyond the moral imperatives of a religious system. For couples within the secular approach of religion, the negotiation of differences stands outside the scope of religion and transition from one major religion to the other does not exist either as a potential possibility or as a subject of negotiation. Yiannis, a Greek agnostic, explains the reason why a disaffiliated person from a major religious tradition may consider conversion as out of scope: *"In order to change something… you must already have something to change".*

In the secular approach of intermarriage, religion bears minimal salience on the organisation of lifestyle. With religious discourse not being the dominant discourse within the mixed family, the emphasis is put on negotiations over other ethnic, cultural and ideological significations. Ethnic and cultural diversity is celebrated within the intimate relationship and exchanges take place in a non-religious context. Drawing on notions of cosmopolitanism and humanitarianism can be helpful in explaining the multiple exchanges that take place between conventionally religious partners within the intimate relationship. Religion can be a potential catalyst for humanitarian activism or a cosmopolitan embrace (Levitt, 2008:770). Sila, a Turkish conventionally religious Muslim proposes an approach of exchange between Islam and Christianity.

> *"I like this way of Islam because it is covering other religions. I wish everybody had the opportunity to read the Jewish book, the Bible and the Koran. So that they can*

decide… and they don't have to decide, maybe they can make a mixed [religion]… you don't have to believe in a book. You can believe in something mixed".

The "cosmopolitan embrace" dissociates them from both the majority and minority religion and culture and creates new individualised 'mixtures'. These couples represent the new, urban, globalised stratum of society and are more mobile and less bound to local and national contexts (Collet, 2015).

Striking an interreligious balance as a mode of conjugal adjustment was delicate in the single case of a mixed relationship between two conservatively religious partners, Palestinian Muslim, Faisal and Greek Christian, Katerina. There were clear understandings about their solid and non-negotiable identification with their original religious affiliations, the salience of their religious views and their moral values. There was complete absence of negotiations over religious conversion. In the following quote of Katerina, we can observe the low level of negotiation and identity shifts.

"Since he does not hinder me to go to the church, to believe in my God and I don't hinder him to believe in Allah and go to the mosque, there is no issue. I believe what I believe and he believes what he believes."

This mixed relationship between two conservative Christian and Muslim partners was ethically equivalent. Finding themselves at an equivalent level of religiosity and understanding of the salience of religion for their intimate relationship, allowed them to discuss opinions, views and experiences. At the same time, their mixed relationship was characterised by a low degree of exchanges, mediation and shared practices. There was no space for personalised mixtures.

Negotiating religious homogamy

Conservative religious partners, an analytical category of religious self- identification, as indicated in the methodology, usually "resolve" the religious difference through conversion either to Islam or Christianity. The movement of an individual from one major religious tradition to another fulfils the functional role of attaining homogamy within the family. There are two modes of attainment of homogamy, through conjugal adjustment to the dominant religion and culture in the case of conversion to Christianity or 'inverse relational integration' (Rodríguez-García et al., 2015; Collet, 2015) a pattern in which the native spouse integrates into the sociocultural world of the immigrant spouse in the case of conversion to Islam.

Conversion to Christianity differs analytically from conversion to Islam because the first is often seen as a social assimilation mechanism with the adjustment of the migrant or minority partner to the dominant religion that is potentially rewarded with the improvement of the socioeconomic position of the migrant partner. The christening of a Muslim marks the entry within the Greek family and subsequently the religious assimilation within Greek society due to the concurrence of Orthodoxy and Hellenism. Sila, a Turkish Muslim woman, recalls being advised by relatives that: *"if I become an Orthodox, I can find a job more easily because nobody gives work to a Muslim"*. In this case, baptism can be seen as a strategy of strengthening the position of the immigrant partner in socioeconomic terms and reinforcing the integration of the migrant in the Greek dominant society. As Sila, Turkish Muslim, said: *"When you say "I'm an Orthodox as a Turkish person. I changed my religion" it somehow sounds good."*

Conversion from Islam to Christianity as a strategy of mediation of religious diversity had been a typical procedure with the purpose of overcoming legal obstacles stemming from the lack of a legal framework regulating interreligious marriages in Greece. I have encountered two cases of conversion to Christianity: the conversion of a minority Muslim of Turkish ethnic origin and the conversion of a Turkish Muslim "marriage migrant". In the context of the dominant Greek - Christian nationalistic discourse, that was prevalent in the 1960s in the Greek - Turkish diplomatic relationships, the christening of the minority Turkish Muslim was bestowed a special "mission". Smaro listened to the advice of her "spiritual father" against the will of her own family: *"You are the chosen sheep of God! You have been given the opportunity to turn a heterodox into Christian, into ours! Say yes!"* The ethical imperative to "turn a heterodox into ours" and her functional achievement as a "chosen sheep of God" in a symbolic battle of Greek Orthodox Christianity vs. Turkish Islam attributed a highly political meaning and nationalistic dimension to the conversion of the minority Muslim husband to Christianity. Inversely, Marina's conversion to Christianity, that, as we have already seen, mostly achieved the purpose of the acquisition of a residence permit, took place in the late 1990s in a different socio-political context.

This mode of adjustment concerns couples who have a deliberate desire to assimilate (Collet, 2015). In the first case of the religious conversion to Christianity of the Turkish minority husband, the assimilation of the "heterodox" takes place to the detriment of the minority partner's cultural references. In both cases of conversion to Christianity that I encountered, 'typical' conversion stimulated commitment to religious practice and consolidation of a Christian identity. Marina said:

> "*I couldn't stand the idea that we will have two religions inside the house. Nobody forced me. I changed religion so as to marry my husband, to have the same religion in the family and over time I learned it and I loved it...*"

Conversion to Islam marks the adjustment of the Greek partner to the religion of the migrant partner. The frame of Islam provides a recognisable logic and set of "interpretative repertoires", which are systematically used in order to describe relationships to new places of residence and family (Ryan and Vacchelli, 2013). Conversion to Islam is a "personal matter" in the sense that it does not infer any substantial legal consequences and does not influence the convert's legal status as a Greek citizen. Converts to Islam are aware of the political dimension of their conversion within the specific Greek political and historical context and beware of the prejudice that Muslims exert pressure to their partners to convert to Islam in the Western societies.

The conservative religious Muslim husband determines the religious discourse within the family and the religious affiliation of the children born within marriage. The Muslim partner stands as the "advocator" of his religion and gatekeeper to the information that he deems "correct". In this way, the Muslim partner has the opportunity to ensure access to information about Islam and shape the religious and ideological discourse within the family. The convert may experience the quest or encounter period as a lonely process due to isolation, restriction or interruption of relationships with their own family and social environment. The Muslim partner provides support and recognition during this highly reflective period of conjugal adjustment. Approving and confirming this new outlook on life and the new religious self that parents and friends might not recognise and accept may enhance the decision to convert (Mansson McGinty, 2006).

The role of men during the conversion process consists of advocating in favor of their religion, offering a compact ideological "capping stone" and emotional support and "welcoming" their wives to their family and community that may contribute to the decision to convert. Hassan, a Syrian Muslim, said:

> *"I didn't teach her or put any pressure on her… she was reading about religion before me. Me, with what I did to myself, not to her, I showed her the right image of religion. I did for myself and she saw on her own the right image of religion. And that helped her."*

Fahruk, a Saudi Arabian Muslim admits that he used his power of persuasion with "words" and discussion to advise his wife about what he considers as his duty to "help". Even though he

believes that religious beliefs concern one's own conscience and personal relationship towards God and recognises the right of religious self-determination, I think that what underlies his behaviour is the confidence that he advocates in favour of the "true" religion. As Fahruk said:

> *"If she wants, she can change religion. If she does not want, it's her own problem; I cannot force her but at least I have said it".*

Religious sentiments and inner spiritual quests that usually preceded the acquaintance with the Muslim partner are re-interpreted within the new frame of Islam that now forms and defines the organisation of daily routine through the cohabitation with a Muslim partner. The majority culture partner manages to reorient their biographies by purposely adopting new values and norms, which do not coincide with those of the majority society (Collet, 2015). Converts promote their understanding of Islam as a religious system based on the values of family and community that can compensate for, as Magda, a Greek convert, put it, *"what is sometimes missing… what society should really be… as societies used to be in the old days…".* Conversion to Islam fulfils nostalgic and a-historic collective memories of structures, values and human relationships that it is doubtful whether they ever co-existed at the same time and place in Greek society. In this case, Greek wives adopt "conservative" traditional rules of ethical behaviour, moral visions of traditional family and traditional society and advocate in favour of the functional role of religion in interpersonal relationships in Greek society, moralising and traditionalism. Decline of the established mainstream religion is evident in criticisms of the Greek Orthodox clergy and questioning of the Trinity Dogma. Magda, a Greek convert especially comments on the "indecent" attire of women attending the Church, the stripping of Christian sacraments from theological essence and the declining effect of Christianity within Greek society.

The convert to Islam espouses the cultural references of her minority partner (Collet, 2015). The Greek wife is, usually, introduced into a specific cultural understanding of religion where for example Arabic, Syrian or Indian cultural elements become important for their cultural references. In this case, Islam does not represent abstract religious views but becomes grounded practice enriched through personal experience. Convert women ground their Muslim identity in the particular sociocultural context of their husband's country of origin. Their references are drawn from specific experiences; Vicky often talks about Islam in Syria, Maria refers to Egypt and Stella draws on India.

Conversion may also concern women as a social obligation in order to be accepted by the family of the Muslim partner or within his ethnic and/or religious community (Allievi, 2006:122). Stella, a Greek Cypriot married to an Indian Muslim, said:

> *"He hadn't ever set the issue. On the contrary, he would say that if we got married I would be able to keep my religion. That would not please him enough, but it wasn't a point of pressure. Although they agree to a Muslim marrying a Christian woman… they do not know… they are a closed society. Maybe they had implanted in his mind that it is not the best thing to marry a Christian woman. And he was simply confused; he didn't know what the right thing to do was".*

Conversion is offered as a solution to the husband's ambivalence towards challenging long-standing traditions within closed ethnic and/or religious community. Although conversion is not posed as a precondition, prerequisite or even demand prior to the wedding, it facilitates social processes and attributes symbolic status to the female convert within her husband's family and religious community. The female convert has the opportunity to disentangle her future husband from his moral dilemmas, develop privileged relations with the family of the minority spouse and establish herself as "his ideal wife" (Allievi, 2006; Collet, 2015).

Gender figures in the different participation rates and roles in the process of conversion (van Nieuwkerk, 2006). Women's agency and self-determination may be lauded publicly but women considered as lacking agency, or worse still women judged to have rejected agency (for example, by wearing a veil or choosing certain marriages) are condemned (Williams, 2010). Five out of seven cases of conversion in the research sample are women, while negotiation of transition to Christianity came up strongly for women of Turkish ethnic origin or Turkish nationality. The five study participants who converted to Islam have experienced conversion as a highly reflexive and long process of questioning. Odasso (2014), as cited in Collet (2015), has argued that this conjugal mode of adjustment is experienced as "inner migration", i.e. an auto-biographical transformation. Despite female conversion narratives being presented as processes of identity formation through the practice of 'free choice', their resolution to convert to their partner's religion is contingent upon affectionate bonding, recognition by the Muslim or Christian partner and the contention of this identity through family reactions. Stella said:

> *"I could simply not do this with a stranger. I would never decide that I embrace Islam and then go find a man I didn't know before. This man had to pass from a friend to a colleague, meet him and get to know him as a person first".*

A wife who claims the “ownership” and the “agency” over her decision to convert to her husband's religion may use her convert status as a kind of symbolic and cultural capital, based on which she can legitimately argue with her husband about the right interpretation of Islam and its consequences for daily life (Wohlrab-Sahr, 2006:74). The symbolic and cultural capital is substantiated by the high education level of the female converts and their social status as active, smart professionals and the insider status as Greek citizens. The wife as a Greek educated woman may differentiate her interpretations of Islam based on her experiences, culture, educational resources from her husband’s interpretations that are embedded within his own culture. This way, the wife claims her right of agency over her religious interpretations as a “self-taught” Muslim against her husband’s role as a teacher derived from his status as an “original” born Muslim. Greek converts claim to profess 'true Islam' because it is not embedded in traditional culture (Ryan, 2013a). Vicky said:

> *“It’s harder because we both have our own interpretation of the same thing. My husband is a born Muslim so he stops at some things that are integrated within his culture and I’m a kind of self-taught Muslim so the way I see things are very-very different. It made our life slightly harder but more interesting at least”.*

Religious conversion failed to “resolve” religious diversity and different interpretations that are embedded in the ethnic and cultural context. The process of adjustment to the minority partner’s culture, the experienced “inner migration” is still a long and often, challenging process. Sharing common religious affiliation does not eliminate negotiations of religious understandings and interpretations, while cultural and engendered exchanges and negotiations over social standing are disguised under different interpretations of the religious belief system.

Conservative religious partners organise their lives in a homogamous family setting according to a single religious system either of Christianity or Islam. Homogamous couples pursue the re-appropriation of religion and the adoption of religious morality as a personal lifestyle choice. Conversion indicates very high level of religious exchange between the intimate partners and increased salience of religion for the organisation of intimate life according to traditional moral and religious values. The deeper motivation and functional role of conversion as religious identity shifts or exchanges between the Muslim and Christian partners consist in offering the resolving “solution”, the answer to the puzzle of intra- or interpersonal tensions and societal conflicts.

In the following section, I shall analyse the adjustment of the religious practices of the Muslim partner in the context of migration and minoritisation, before proceeding to examine the adjustment of the practices of the mixed couple.

Religious practices of mixed nationality relationship migrants

Organised, individualised, and internalised expressions of transnational religion help us understand the role of religion as a catalyst for transnational livelihoods (Levitt, 2001a) and the ways in which mixed nationality relationship migrants reshape their religious life. Many migrants draw increasingly heavily on traditions and practices in order to maintain a sense of themselves and a sense of cultural authenticity away from home (Williams, 2010:24). Especially, when Muslim migrants find themselves in an environment in which Islam is no longer normative and institutionalised as it was in the Muslim majority society of their origin, they become more reflexive and question previously taken-for-granted assumptions about what it means to be Muslim (Kibria, 2008). Reaffirming traditional beliefs and rituals can be a source of comfort and protection in the migration experience (Portes and Rumbaut, 2006). Before Tugba moved to Greece, she considered herself "a very lazy Muslim" but she now feels that religion became more important to her and she became "more Muslim". Practicing Islam and cultural traditions brought up feelings of happiness and empowerment that helped her confront her loneliness as a migrant in Greece. Tugba describes her practice regarding a Turkish custom 'Aşure' or Noah's Pudding that is served during the first month of the Islamic calendar.

> *"My mother used to make a special prayer [for Aşure] and used to give to people... share with people. Here, I started doing this and I began to make the prayer. And that's why I told you that when I came here I became more religious. He is asking me "why are you praying something for 'Asure'?" I said this is the tradition, I need to do this. This is something about the plenty. I'm cooking it every year here and I'm giving both to Christian and Muslim people. But I'm always giving to our neighbours. They got used to it and they are asking me "will you do this year?" because they like it [laughing]."*

The "re-discovery" of religion and other ethnic or cultural traditions in the formation of migrant subjectivities may be enhanced as part of the family formation process. Marriage as part of the immigrants' life cycle is associated with increased religiosity (Van Tubergen, 2006). Young Muslims may become more religiously observant as they get older, especially when they

become parents (Ryan, 2013a). As Tugba takes over the role of housewife and care giver from her mother, she starts practising customs and traditions reflectively and reactively to her husband's religiosity. Also, sharing this traditional dish enhances her social interactions and exchanges with her neighbours in Greece.

When religion is not the main script of life or the primary identity, religious practices of non-organised Muslim immigrants undergo changes as part of their migration experience in Greece. For conventionally religious Muslims, the observance of religious practice is contingent upon social interactions and contextual factors. The departure of Muslim immigrants from the traditional Muslim society and distance from their family diminish the salience of Muslim rituals and interrupts the compliance with religious practices. Amer, a Palestinian atheist, when asked if he has celebrated Muslim feasts during the years he has been living in Greece, replied:

> *"It happened to forget about it, really... this question is very important... It happened that the feast was over and I hadn't even called my own people. It was not just me... we were a group of Arab Muslims at the student residences and nobody remembered..."*

While non-practicing, non-organised Muslim participants point out that during the years of their migration in Greece they have not observed the fast, they resume religious practices when they return to their countries of origin and re-integrate in the family and community web of relationships. Amer resumed the practice of fast when he visited Palestine and participated in the family ritual.

> *"Ok, it's something we did since when we were little... the years I've been here [in Greece] I haven't done it... I tried only to make it through for a week, but it was hard... last year I called down [to Gaza], I did it, you get it? It's the environment, we were in a house where everyone, even the youngest was fasting and you think... ok, and if I sit down to eat will I find anything to eat? And you fast and you get into this process... ok, I'm not saying that they were forcing me, I also wanted to do it, to be inside the family, it's not only the fast, it's the afternoon that the whole family gathers and the other family besides..."*

Feasts are special occasions for sharing cultural memory (Assmann, 2008; Assmann and Czaplicka, 1995). Cultural memory is a form of collective memory, in the sense that it is shared by a number of people and it conveys a collective, cultural identity (Robinson et al., 2010). The practice of fast is embedded within cultural memory, something that Amer used to do "since they were little" and he gets to share it with his family when he visits them. The lack of cultural

memories in the country of migration leads to abandonment of practice, assimilatory forgetting and contextual adjustment.

Holidays in Greece are based on the Christian Orthodox calendar. The traditional Muslim holidays are not recognised as official holidays except for the Muslim minority populations in Western Thrace. Everyday ordinary schedule is not disrupted for non-practicing Muslim immigrants. The working schedule of Muslim immigrants in Greece conflicts with Muslim religious observances. Abdalah, who is a non-practicing Muslim from Jordan and resides in Western Thrace, said:

> *"I'm a Muslim among Christians, I can't do anything. Religious feasts pass by without any interest... I don't take any notice... It never crossed my mind to go and do bayram with the Muslims in Komotini or in the villages around Komotini... If I have work to do, then work I will do."*

In spite of sharing the same Islamic religion, relations between Muslim immigrants and minority Muslims in Western Thrace are very limited (Antoniou, 2003; Triandafyllidou and Gropas, 2009). The distinctiveness of group affiliations is marked by different understandings and perceptions of their religious identity and by their loyalty towards different home states (Oktem, 2010). There is no empirical evidence that Muslim immigrants practice religion, feasts or other customs together with minority Muslims in Western Thrace. Muslim immigrants and minority Muslims in Western Thrace do not share a common sense of belonging to a wider transnational Muslim community. Fragmentation across ethnic lines reflects diversity within Islam, different Islamic traditions between indigenous and migrant Muslims, but also among Muslim immigrants of the same ethnicity, stemming from different national and ethnic origins, religious traditions, migratory histories and processes of settlement in Greece (Hatziprokopiou and Evergeti, 2014).

Transnational migrants use religion to delineate an alternative cartography of belonging; religious icons and sacred shrines, rather than national flags, proclaim these religious spaces (Levitt, 2001a). Religious practices and expressions of Muslims are destabilised, challenged and even hindered by structural impediments, such as the lack of prayer halls of reverence or an official mosque in Athens. Migrants use their agency to act upon structural impediments by forming Muslim associations and organising Islamic religious sites. Informal mosques are the actual places hosting the everyday performances of Muslim religiosity, especially in urban centres such as Athens and Thessaloniki, and are social spaces playing multiple roles in the migratory experience (Hatziprokopiou and Evergeti, 2014). Non-practicing Muslim participants

say that they avoid going to the 'illegal' prayer halls because these are "dirty, dark and miserable places" that are "humiliating for humans" and unsuitable for revering God. However, there are migrants who take an active role in organising institutional structural arrangements within existing possibilities. Upon settling in a new environment, immigrants often soon set about collectively organising themselves for purposes of religious worship (Vertovec, 2004). Faisal, a conservative Palestinian Muslim, shortly after moving to Greece, took the initiative to organise his fellow Muslims and arrange some space at the state university that was made available as a prayer hall.

Migrants' religious institutions are sites where globally diffused models of social organisation and individuals' local responses converge to produce new mixes of religious beliefs and practices (Levitt, 2004). Although Islamic religious holidays are not recognised as public, there is a customary celebration of Eid Al-Adha organised each year in a sports stadium in Athens (Hatzopoulos and Kambouri, 2010). The conservative religious Muslims of the research sample participate in the celebrations of Eid Al-Adha organised by the Muslim Association of Greece. When Islam is used as "a dominant set of interpretative repertoires" to make sense of the migration experience (Ryan and Vacchelli, 2013), religious observances and festivities are not interrupted, even when they take place in a sports stadium.

Religious practices and meanings may be destabilised, challenged or even subverted by migration experience (Pepicelli, 2010). While some conventionally religious Muslims may re-enact religious practices, customs and traditions reactively to their migration experience, other non-organised, non-practicing Muslims may contextually and selectively integrate into the dominant cultural practices of the host society. On the contrary, religious practices of organised, conservatively religious Muslims do not seem to be destabilised by their migration experience. Conservative religious Muslims act upon institutional and organisational impediments by organising associational forms and structures. I shall now analyse organised, personalised and internalised practices in the context of mixed relationships.

Religious practices in mixed families

Conventionally religious partners who form mixed families describe an active and rich family life. As mixed families celebrate the major religious feasts of both Christianity and Islam, their family festive life becomes richer in religious holidays, celebrations and cultural traditions. Tugba, a Turkish Muslim described their festive calendar as follows:

"We have a very rich religion so we have 2... 4... two Christian feasts plus two Muslim feasts, so we have more holidays [laughing]".

Similarly, Memetis, a minority Muslim said:

"Life was richer and with a heavier financial burden. Heavier financial burden because of the 2 extra feasts…"

There is symmetry of practice between Christian and Muslim religious festivities and traditions. To take but one example, the 'Festival of the Sacrifice' that is called 'Kurban Bayram' (in Turkish) or 'Eid al-Adha' (in Arabic) is celebrated with the traditional cooking of lamb that resembles the roasting on the spit of the lamb for the Orthodox Christian Easter celebration. Stefanos, Greek Christian, when asked how he perceives their "rich religion" answered:

"I don't treat religious celebrations as feasts of the opposite side, there are common points".

Haditse, a Turkish Muslim, explains how they integrate the celebrations of both Christian and Muslim holidays in the family framework:

"I don't think anybody inside the family can tell the difference, neither the children understand that this time we have Muslim feasts and the other time we have Christian ones, we just celebrate... we see them as feasts and we are glad simply."

Mixed families of Greek Christians and minority Muslims describe family celebrations very low in rituals and observances. Erato explains that there was no tradition of observing the fast in her Muslim Roma family of origin and defends the agency of her own decision not to practice the fast confirming her sphere of freedom to determine her religious practices beyond the relationship to her Greek partner. Erato said: *"I don't fast. Not because he doesn't want or he doesn't allow me, because I don't want to."* Alis, a young Muslim Roma, who lives in a ghettoised and marginalised Roma settlement, makes an interesting statement.

"We are not really Muslims because we are raised among the Christians and we keep more your customs and your religion. Even we that we are Muslims are strange to our religion… We are strange to our customs. We have been used to Greek society".

The similarities between Muslim Roma culture and the surrounding Christian society are the result of choice and adjustment to the dominant culture (Zaimakis and Kallinakaki, 2004:314).

As an attempt to escape negative stereotypes and social exclusion, Muslim Roma display multiple or plural identities, often claiming an ethnic Turkish identity and/or a dominant Greek one, depending on the social context (Mavrommatis, forthcoming; Ioannidou, 2009 as cited in Evergeti et al., 2014). Taking into consideration the living conditions and the socioeconomic characteristics of this young Muslim, I think that this statement indicates a positive self-presentation style asserting his integration within Greek society. On the other hand, familiarisation with, especially, local customs and festive celebrations with friends and partners have played some role in the socialisation processes of young minority Muslims as designated by their religious exogamy.

Mixed family interactions produce reconfigured practices that renew and re-signify the meaning of traditional celebrations. Spiros offers an innovative example of cultural reproduction.

> *"Because my wife doesn't have a name day... when there is a feast, we summon our friends to treat them for the Bayram and we say that it is "Saint – Haditse's day" and they bring her presents [laughing]".*

This reconfigured "family tradition" of celebrating Bayram as a Christian name day interprets a Muslim feast into a meaningful event in the Greek sociocultural context that enables the participation of friends and extended family. As Tugba said, when she came to Greece she learned that *"every Greek has two birthdays, one is the name day and the other one is normal birthday"*. A unique, personalised "name" day is dedicated to Haditse within the family's festive calendar, a special occasion when she receives gifts from friends and family. Jeldtoft (2011) terms these reconfigured ritual practices as personal, pragmatic and individualistic practices that at the same time are connected to something that the interviewees see as 'Islam' on an abstract level. While Haditse is still "doing Islam", she is practicing Islam as a meaningful occasion for the mixed family.

The example of 'The Procession of the Epitaph', that takes place on Good Friday offers insight regarding the ritualistic elements of performances or the interaction and affective bonding during performances as experienced by three Muslim participants. Sila, a Turkish Muslim, points out the aspect of ritualistic performance in the Procession of the Epitaph:

> *"I like ceremonies and I like the smell of Epitaph and it is funny, because as they are carrying the candles, some people are burning their hair [laughing]. It is enjoyable. And for Easter, they are making fireworks that we were enjoying them as kids. That is fun!"*

Conversely, for another Turkish Muslim, Tugba, the procession of the Epitaph is conceptualised as a dramatic theatrical performance, an "unconvincing cultural practice or a failed symbolic performance" (Alexander and Mast, 2006:15).

> *"I like ceremonies but for example the ceremonies for Maundy Thursday and the Epitaph Procession are like theatre. They exaggerate for me".*

In the narrative of Faisal, a Palestinian conservative Muslim, we see at least three aspects of rituals: affirmation of affective elements of relationships through the common participation with his Christian partner, connecting behaviour with values, and the symbolic aspect of rituals (Bennett et al., 1988).

> *"Sometimes you do some things and you see that it was wrong that you hadn't done them before. Now I state it as an opinion. I went... yes... I know... my religion does not prohibit it. Nothing hinders me from going and I want first to show my love and that I respect you and your religion. I haven't thought about it before this relationship that I'd go to the Church and I'd light a candle or walk after and drop a flower on the Epitaph. The relationship normalises that".*

According to Alexander and Mast (2006:13), "because performances precipitate degrees of liminality, they are capable of transforming social relations. The communitarian emphasis on holism, on cultural, social, and psychological integration, is palpable." The affective component of family routines and rituals (Fiese et al., 2002) is reaffirmed in Faisal's sense of righteousness in attending Christian religious practices of celebrations. Practicing a traditional Christian custom out of respect to his partner does not touch upon his level of belief. On the contrary, it reaffirms his value system and proves his love and respect. The mixed relationship normalises "mixed" practices. Interreligious practices are generated and renewed memories of novel common practices affirm the affective elements of relationships.

Gender, ethnic and class factors play an important role in the ways in which religious practices become meaningful in different contexts (Pepicelli, 2010). The preparation of festive food is a highly gendered practice. Erato, a Muslim Roma, demonstratively said: *"We do food, they eat."* The female Muslim immigrants prove receptive to learning Greek customs and traditions. Muslim women, who are married to Christian men, perform traditional Christian customs that are usually catered for by Greek housewives like the dyeing of red eggs for Easter or the baking of the traditional pastries. However, Muslim immigrant women often find that their role as housewives and their duties as care givers for their children in Greece hinder compliance with

Muslim religious observances. Sila, a Turkish Muslim, states that living with her Greek husband has interrupted her usual practice of fast.

> *"I used to fast... I'd like to fast still but sometimes it is difficult for me because I'm living with him and it's hard to wake up at midnight and early in the morning... when I go home without my husband, I'm trying to fast one day or two days..."*

Conventionally religious or nominal Christian and Muslim participants adjust their practices in a way to fit within their mixed family life. The practice of religion becomes selective and flexible according to personal choices and preferences. Religion is adjusted in the newly integrated Muslim – Greek family context. Jeldtoft (2011) has named this kind of practice "individualism-as-pragmatism". Conversely, conservatively religious participants are willing to adjust their life to religion and not the other way round. Katerina and Faisal, who are both conservatively religious, have devised a strategy to accommodate the practice of fasting within their common habit of sharing meals by adjusting their eating patterns during Lent and Ramadan.

> *"When I was fasting during the Holy Week, he ate whatever I was having because of the fast. Or respectively when it was the Ramadan, I ate only a little during the day and I was waiting for him to eat together in the evening".*

Joint religious activities entail opportunities for couples to participate in meaningful or enjoyable rituals together and reaffirm their connection and intimacy (Fiese and Tomcho, 2001). Praying became a spiritual activity that Vicky got to share with her husband after she converted to Islam. "*We recite Qur'an together with my husband very often. He reads in Arabic and I read in Greek, he reads back in Arabic or I read in English and so on."* Sharing the same religion enables homogamous couples to organise common action and set common targets. Maria, a Greek convert to Islam, said: *"The common course was what changed with conversion. A very active man on Islam acquired a partner"*. Her husband, Salih, Egyptian reiterated that: *"Since she became a Muslim, she has been working more with me on my activities for Islam and she has now become my teacher".*

The beneficial effect of salàt (the five daily prayers), as well as of *wudu* (performing ablutions) and fasting for psychological and physical wellbeing is currently stressed among conservative Muslims. According to Jouili (2007:282), the "doing yourself good" discourse is prevalent in many Islamic organisations in Europe as it offers a legitimate justification for one's faith and religious practice in a secular context. Maria considers that daily prayer has brought up many changes in her life and she is advising everyone irrespective of religion to "introduce daily prayer into their life". Amrida, an Indian Muslim, shares a similar experience about the

beneficial effect of prayer. While advocating in favour of Islam and supporting his wife during her conversion-in-process, Amrida, re-discovered religion and "re-converted" to Islam. He describes how his interest in the religion of his origin was stimulated and revived during his wife's conversion process and how he experienced an inner transformation through intensification of faith and practice of Islam:

> *"It was a very different experience for me and changed quite many things in myself, not only in my wife... now I do many things that I wasn't doing before. I wasn't praying regularly and now I feel to pray and if I don't pray I don't feel well. Now even at my work I get 5 minutes break and I'm going and I'm praying for a while. I feel more relaxed".*

The sociocultural integration of the native partner into the migrant's religion and culture provokes a bidirectional effect of religious integration in the mixed family context. Muslim partners argue that they benefited from their wives' conversion to Islam in terms of the sociocultural and religious practices in the reintegrated family context, including the upbringing of children in a homogamous family. Negotiating religious homogamy had beneficial multicultural effect for the Muslim-born partner. The integration of the native partner into the migrant's culture helped them organise common practices, life-course and targets and facilitated the processes of their bidirectional adjustment in the reintegrated family context.

Festive family encounters

Despite differences among families in terms of socioeconomic status, ethnic background, and religious orientation, family celebrations, family traditions, family life cycle rituals and day-to-day life events that have become ritualised are universal to nearly all families (Wolin and Bennett, 1984). Families and friends gather together to celebrate and enjoy the festive holidays. But how do Muslim and Christian family members celebrate feasts when they come together? What holidays have they decided to celebrate? How do they perceive, integrate and reconcile multiple religious practices in the family framework?

Due to geographic proximity, mixed families with minority Muslims and Turkish Muslims often spend Christian holidays with the extended Christian family and Muslim festivities with the extended Muslim family, respectively. There is a certain asymmetry in reciprocal exchanges and mutual participation in the cases of Muslim families in war-ridden countries (e.g. Palestine,

Syria) or in remote distance countries (e.g. India, Afghanistan). Holidays are predominantly occasions of family gatherings that reinforce a sense of belonging within the family for the heterodox or immigrant partner. Family rituals provide the family and individual members with a sense of identity by creating feelings of belonging (Bennett et al., 1988; Fiese et al., 2002). Even if partners act as guests or observers when visiting the in-law family, the affirmation of relationships and their designation as indivisible members of a group are established. Amer, describes the importance of feelings of belonging to his wife's Greek family irrespective of the occasion of celebration and religious beliefs:

> *"I went with them to the Church and they were teasing me and I was teasing them... without believing and doing various things, but it's nice to be inside the family for whatever they celebrate".*

Celebrations of religious feasts are occasions of social encounters and gatherings. The emphasis is put on the "the joy of gathering together" and the sense of belonging in the Greek society. Salih, a conservative religious Egyptian Muslim whose Greek wife, Maria, converted to Islam, describes eloquently that celebrating Christian feasts is a social activity they get to share with the extended Greek family.

> *"We emphasise religion a lot. Yes I said I am Greek [citizen] but Muslim, but since I live in this society I won't be isolated from this society... We live in a society that I am a Muslim and half of my family are Christians. Are we going to tell our children "Do not celebrate?" Then you are losing something. Not only we celebrate, but we are having a very good time too."*

Apart from "having a very good time" together with the Greek family on religious holidays, Salih and Maria describe that their children love singing carols and enjoy decorating the Christmas tree. Similar to other participants, they do not consider adorning the Christmas tree as a religious practice as it is not embedded within Greek Orthodox traditions. As a practice it is considered "a little toy", as part of the westernisation and commercialisation of Christmas. Maria said: *"I consider all these completely harmless because they simply have nothing to do with Christianity or Islam".* They are not worried that having a Christmas tree in their homes will undermine their children's (Muslim) religious identities (Levitt, 2008). By "enjoying" Christmas and other holidays, they reaffirm their sense of belonging in Greek society. Muslim and Christian religious symbols, as symbolic modes of material representations of the sacred, that have emotional or symbolic value, often, adorn their houses.

The affirmation of interconnected relationships and the designation of family membership seem to be interrupted in the case of Fahruk. Fahruk is a conservative religious Muslim from Saudi Arabia, who had lived in Greece almost 25 years by the time of our interview encounter. Despite my persistent attempts to meet the convert wife, Fahruk, representing the dominant voice of the family discourse, did not allow my access to his wife. Voicing conservative gender roles, he defines rigid lines of female belonging to the husband's family.

> *"And now she is ours. I'm not theirs, she is ours. Always the woman goes with her husband. I do not know how you do it here. But again that's how I see it, so the woman builds her new home with her husband. I believe that's how it is."*

There is an obvious division between the wife's extended Christian family of origin and her homogamous Muslim family. While she sometimes participates at family religious celebrations, Fahruk invokes professional obligations for abstaining from the practices of the Christian family.

> *"She goes with her family and she does everything. Sometimes she makes things at home; her family brings them at home. But not many times, they mostly do it at their home".*

A sense of belonging is interrupted under rigidly defined gender roles. Certain specialisation and space compartmentalisation of religious practices are distinct between the Christian family of origin that is the carrier of Christian traditions and the Muslim family of procreation.

Family celebrations can trigger euphoria, but also reflection on identities and problematisation of practices. Social interactions during family celebrations may prove complex when religious identities are actively expressed, performed and contested. Stella, a Greek Cypriot convert to Islam, that, as we have already seen, restored her relationships with her extended Greek Cypriot family, but avoids talking with them about religious issues, felt challenged when her Indian husband and she had to share the festive table with the extended Greek Cypriot family, where not only pork but also alcohol was being consumed. Stella said:

> *"It's hard... I compromise in feeling uncomfortable when we have to sit around the table together where everyone is drinking and eating meat, but for their own joy we try as much as we can to be there at their holidays. They see me feeling uncomfortable and wonder why I do. And sometimes I have to hide it and say I do it out of respect for my husband..."*

Differentiating her eating habits from the rest of the family embarrasses Stella, who has not talked openly about her conversion to her parents. Her neo-Muslim identity is actively

expressed when she refuses to consume alcohol or eat pork during family interactions. In turn, her parents contest her identity by “wondering” why she does so and challenging her to admit to her conversion.

Festive family encounters are predominantly social events, when the mixed couple or mixed family get together with the extended Christian or Muslim family. The designation of family membership, the reaffirmation of the sense of belonging in the extended family and in Greek society and the joy and euphoria generated by social interactions, encounters and events are some of the multiple functions of festive family encounters that are reiterated in the case of transnational family mixedness. Religious identities are enacted, performed and contested in the encounters of the mixed couple with extended family, but they are also re-affirmed and re-integrated in a process of multidirectional adjustments and accommodations of religious practices.

Conclusion

The mediation of religious “Othering” takes place among partners who are characterised by multiple levels of identification with religion of origin and different degrees of practising religion. Intermarriage initiates a process of identity shifts between the Christian and Muslim partners that end up in re-negotiations of religious identities. Re-negotiations may lead to institutional transition in the case of conservative religious partners. Conservative religious partners organise their lives in homogamous family settings according to the religious system of Christianity or Islam. Conversion indicates a very high level of religious exchange between the intimate partners and increased salience of religion for the organisation of family life according to traditional moral and religious values. Negotiation of conversion did not lead to institutional transition in the case of conventionally religious and secularist partners, as it is not professed as functional strategy of mediation of their mixedness. Religious discourse is not the dominant discourse within the mixed family, but it is rather contingent upon ethnic, cultural and ideological significations. Ethnic and cultural diversity is celebrated within mixed relationships, while exchanges take place in a non-religious context. Negotiations of religious mixedness and social, cultural and religious practices had strong bidirectional effect on the accommodation of both partners, native and migrant, in the re-integrated mixed family context.

This chapter has offered novel data on the everyday and festive, religious and social practices of mixed and homogamous families in the Greek sociocultural context. I have discussed a wide range of everyday lived religion and festive family practices that are universal and localised, transnational and translocal (Brickell and Datta, 2011), traditional and reconfigured. Interreligious practice will cause some sort of renewal of collective identity and forge new intercultural memories that affirm the affective elements of relationships. During the family formation process, the mixed or homogamous families consolidate practices, traditions and routines that enable members to participate in the private and public sphere, materialise notions of empowerment and agency and establish a sense of togetherness and belonging to the extended family and Greek society. In the next chapter, I shall follow mixed families to the childrearing phase of family formation and I shall explore cultural, ethnic and religious transmissions to children in mixed Christian – Muslim families in Greece.

Chapter 6

Affiliative strategies of children in Christian – Muslim families

"The children will give a very new perspective to the whole process."

Vicky, Greek convert to Islam

Childrearing in mixed families is considered the most substantial issue that brings a new perspective to the re-integrated mixed family system. Multiple religious identities, cultural, ethnic and kinship affinities, gender dynamics, mediation of being and belonging in multiple social fields, personal taste and preferences as well as sceptical interpretations of religious self-identification and freedom of choice are some of the factors that are translated into strategies of religious and naming affiliations of children in homogamous and mixed faith families.

This chapter aims to explore strategies of religious and cultural affiliation, parenting and upbringing of children in Christian – Muslim families in Greece. First, I analyse the factors that inform the parental strategies of religious affiliation of their children. Then, I present analytically these strategies of religious affiliation and upbringing of Christian, Muslim and religiously unaffiliated children in the context of mixed faith and homogamous families. Following that, I examine how upbringing within cultural, ethnic and religious contexts is affected and challenged by multiple-mixing within extended families and socialisation mechanisms. Last, I approach name conferral as a social process of belonging across ethnic, cultural and religious affiliations and as a strategic choice of identity management.

Factors affecting strategies of religious affiliation

Mixed couples can exert a direct religious socialisation effort by deciding on the religious affiliation of their children and by trying to influence their children's preferences at the level of the family through religious education and religious practice. Parents negotiate the ethnic identification and religious affiliation of their children and instil in them a sense of belonging

within society. A minority person in a mixed marriage will have difficulty transmitting his/her own traits, since the spouse will favour a different set of traits, and peers and role models will be taken from a population mostly of the majority types (Bisin and Verdier, 2000). The effective socialisation of children to a particular religious or ethnic trait is then determined by the interaction of the direct socialisation effort of parents and the indirect assimilative influence of society (Bisin and Verdier, 2000).

Negotiating different approaches to the upbringing of children begins before children are part of the household (Crippen and Brew, 2007). Reaching a decision prior to the wedding upon the religious affiliation of the children that will be born within the marriage fosters communication and marital stability. Participants point out that it is important to clarify the religion of their prospective children before parenthood. However, in some cases, persistent disagreement between partners may lead to inertia and postponement of negotiations until the moment of parenthood arrives. The birth of children could be a catalyst for conflict within intercultural couples who previously minimised the impact of their cultural differences (Crippen and Brew, 2007). Sometimes, religious strategies that have been previously negotiated may not be enough to accommodate children within a new reintegrated family system. Katerina, who is a Greek conservative religious Christian in a cohabiting relationship with a Palestinian Muslim, expressed her reservations about the negotiations over the religious affiliation of their prospective children.

> *"Since there is no marriage, there is no point in talking about it. In case we decide to get married, then a serious issue will come up. I think that this is the most serious problem between two people of different religion. This is the most substantial issue."*

Intercultural couples are more likely to exhibit differences in negotiation style as they embody both dimensions of diverse gender expectations and ethnic difference within the relationship (Mackey and O'Brien, 1998). Women's role in nationalism and diaspora formation, its items and cultural codes – such as domestic symbols, lullaby songs and nursery rhymes – are passed to younger generations through the mothers' hands (Yuval-Davis, 1997; Constable, 2005). Given that mothers are usually the nurturers and the maintainers of culture, it may be assumed that children growing up with migrant mothers will be more culturally in tune with their migrant parent's country of origin and ethnic group (Finnas and O'Leary, 2003; Williams, 2010:196). However, even though it is presumed that fertility, childrearing goals and religious education are within the female sphere of influence (Edwards et al., 2010; Judd, 1990; Nelsen, 1990; Thomson, 1990; Williams and Lawler, 2001), the gendered cultural traditions both in

Orthodox Christianity and in Islam dictate that the child will take after the paternal religious affiliation and kinship affinities. Amer, a Palestinian, despite self-identifying as atheist, is highly aware of the salience of religion in his family and society of his origin.

> *"In my case if my children are not Muslims I'm going to lose my parents… [Palestinian] society is stricter... they wouldn't care that much about their daughter's children; these children are from another family, whereas they care about their son's children… I wouldn't like it not to be able to visit my village and feel ashamed, what for? For a document!"*

Conformity with the norms of Orthodox Christianity, according to "the geographical position of the family" is considered as the societal influence over the child, adaptation skill and integration opportunity or reinforcement of a sense of belonging within Greek society. Parents and prospective parents share a sense of responsibility about their children's welfare, according to which they are perceived as a threat or danger within Greek society. Perceiving xenophobia, racism and intolerance of the different Other as posing a threat to people of different ethnic and religious affiliation, Polina, a Christian married to an Egyptian Muslim, considers christening of her children to be born within wedlock as the only viable strategy in order to protect her children's welfare.

> *"I'm trying to protect our children and make our life easier. I don't want us to have more problems in our lives, especially problems we could have avoided."*

Motivated by feelings that Bisin and Verdier (2000) have defined as "paternalistic altruism" or "imperfect empathy", participants, also, draw on a narrative of choice and free sceptical thinking (Arweck and Nesbitt, 2010b; Ecklund and Lee, 2011). Religious affiliation becomes open to reflexivity and conditioned upon ongoing renegotiations of self-identifications during one's lifetime. Regardless of their personal positioning towards religion, parents acknowledge the opportunity for their children to determine their own religious identity when they reach adolescence. The right of self-determination opens up an array of choices within a multiplicity of frameworks. Strategies of religious affiliations of children in mixed faith families involve the following alternatives: i) children may be affiliated to an institutional religion and identify with one single religious tradition ii) children may be affiliated to an institutional religion, but be exposed to plural and diverse religious traditions as part of their "multiple-mixing" upbringing or iii) children may not be affiliated to any religion, but be encouraged to develop critical thinking and be free "to choose or not to choose". The range of strategies that mixed faith

parents can employ as part of their children's upbringing can be summarised in the phrase "one religion / both religions / no religion" (Gruzen, 1987) or beyond religion.

The option not to confer any religion on the child that is promoted in some cases, is either disregarded or rejected by most participants. Expressions like *"The children go down the drain regarding religion"*, *"You cannot leave them up in the air"* or *"The children will be lost"* are often repeated. Parental religious nurture is dealt with as instilling faith in the existence of God and transmitting moral values to the children. According to Stefanos, a Greek Christian married to a Turkish Muslim,

> *"The child must have a basis to step on and from that point can move on, can inquire, may reject some things or accept other things, this doesn't bother us. However the child must definitely from a young age step on a footing and afterwards find out the rest. If one does not have a background from a young age then one will not acquire any".*

Seen as an evasive strategy or maybe as a "mishap" in the mediation of their religious difference, Anna, a Greek Christian in a cohabiting relationship with an Afghan Muslim, said:

> *"We can't let them be atheists, because we are not atheists."*

Beyond religion, there is respect, egalitarian gender relations and empathy. However, the rationale that was stated thoughtfully by Faisal, a Palestinian Muslim, can easily lead to inertia and indecisiveness.

> *"The issue is that when it comes to this decision… I believe that love comes before respect. Why my child to be a Muslim? Why not to be hers to be a Christian? I don't have this right. You reach up to this point of superiority in thinking. Why do I take this right and I don't give it? This is it as well. You get into this dilemma. She wants to admire him and her mother wants to admire him as a Christian. Same goes for my mum and my dad, me as well. It is this superiority in thinking. The issue is complicated."*

Participants often discussed the influence of grandparents, in-laws and other extended family members over cultural, ethnic and religious transmissions to children. According to Nazarska and Hajdinjak (2010), despite the desire of most mixed families in Greece, not to influence the religious choice of their children, the considerable pressure that the extended Greek family exercised on them to have their children baptised in the Greek Orthodox Church had caused tensions among the spouses. Mixed faith parents anticipate that exposing their children to

religious and cultural plurality within their extended families may cause tensions within the mixed couple. Nefeli, a Greek who self-identified as an atheist, said:

> *"Of course, it's one of the biggest problems that [mixed] couples have to face, mainly because the two sides, the parents are interfering and it is at this point that the relationships break off… Certainly my parents will try to coerce us into baptising them and certainly his parents, maybe more intensely, into making them Muslims…"*

However, pressure from the extended Greek family regarding the religious affiliation of the children did not emerge strongly out of the data. Sila, Turkish Muslim, who would prefer not to influence the religious choice of her children, is willing to yield to the expectations of the Greek extended family. Sila said: "*I think that the relatives will ask for the baptism. So let's give them something, a paper that they want."* Sanctions were also posed by the Greek Orthodox Church when some mixed couples confronted the denial of some priests to baptise their children unless the heterodox partner was baptised Christian Orthodox. This practice appears to depend on the priests' discretion, still it shows the way part of the Christian Orthodox clergy sanctions mixed marriages and tries to influence conversion strategies to Christianity.

The adoption or rejection of a particular institutional religion is linked to a cluster of variables, which one could conceive of as overlapping circles (Arweck and Nesbitt, 2010b). The factors that parents and prospective parents take into account when negotiating the religious affiliation of their children in the Greek context are: the direct religious socialisation effort of the mixed couple and the indirect assimilative influence of the dominant Greek Christian Orthodox society; conformity with the norms of the dominant society according to the "geographical position of the family" (Romano, 2001); negotiation of parenting strategies prior to the wedding or parenthood and re-negotiation of strategies within a new re-integrated family system; gender and ethnic differences; patriarchal kinship affinities in Orthodox Christianity and Islam; "paternalistic altruism" and "imperfect empathy" (Bisin and Verdier, 2000) towards children's welfare; the narrative of choice; tension between the extended families, communities and ethnic groups; combined attitudes of both (prospective) parents. I am going to explore how combinations of these factors, perspectives and preferences, result in a multiplicity of strategies regarding religious affiliation and cultural and ethnic transmissions in homogamous and heterogamous families in Greece.

Strategies of religious affiliation of children and parenting

Mixed faith families

The strategies that parents in mixed faith families followed regarding the religious affiliation of their children are synopsised in the following three alternatives: the children were Christian, Muslim or unaffiliated. I am going to examine the reasons that lie behind each strategy of religious affiliation and upbringing in each one of these contexts.

Christian children

The religious affiliation of children in mixed Christian – Muslim families to Orthodox Christianity is conditioned upon a congruence of factors that are related to the geographical position of the family and the integration of children within the Greek society without suffering discriminations. Many participants brought up the argument that *"if they lived somewhere else, they would think about it differently."* This phrase shows that their religious strategy is conditioned upon the social context they find themselves in. The parental choice to affiliate their children with Orthodox Christianity entails a pragmatic social strategy based on social reasons that foster ethnic and cultural affiliations. Spiros, Greek Christian said:

> *"We baptised our children for social reasons, because we live in Greece, I wouldn't mind if my children were not baptised."*

Baptism is a protective strategy against discrimination and differentiation in a largely homogenous Greek Christian Orthodox population. Greek society is described by participants as intolerant to difference. It lies within the sphere of parental interest to minimise the consequences of their decision to raise their children in a mixed family by integrating them in the dominant religious and ethnic society. In the context of mixed faith families, Greek Christian parents determine the religious affiliation of their children and seek for their Muslim spouses' approval or consensus. Sofia, a Greek Christian married to a minority Muslim, claims the "sphere of influence rule" in the decision-making process (Thomson, 1990) upon the strategy of religious affiliation of her child.

> *"That interested me, because we live here and I would not want the child to stand out from the other children because our society does not accept being different. He*

will still have to face the fact that his parents are of different religions, but I think he will be much better off this way than not having any religion."

The Orthodox Christian religion forms an essential element of the Greek national identity; it has institutionally served as a pillar of the nation through close Church - State bonds that influence institutional frameworks and hence, inevitably affect widespread social stances (Hatziprokopiou, 2016). As mentioned previously in chapter 1, the Eastern Orthodox Church of Greece is not legally separate from the Greek state and the Christian Orthodox religion is constitutionally recognised as 'the prevailing religion in Greece'. Stefanos, a Greek Christian, explains that due to the inseparability of the Orthodox Church and the Greek state it is 'normal' for a child to be baptised Christian.

"Since we decided to live here in Greece, he/she will grow up here and will go to school here, so he should be baptised Christian, always on condition that my wife agrees. Because if we disagreed there would be an issue and we would have to see how we could overcome this problem. Greece and Turkey are states that fortunately or unfortunately are religious; state and religion are identical. Therefore it makes sense that in Greece the child should be Christian for his further life not only for what he believes. If he goes to find a job at the public sector, he will get different treatment as Muslim Greek citizen and different treatment as Christian Greek citizen. It is the same at the army. It is different, it is more normal to be Christian."

In mixed families of minority Muslim and Greek Christian background, the baptism to Christianity offers the opportunity to avoid the stigma attached to minority status. The baptism is the "rite of passage" to the dominant Greek society. An assimilated minority Muslim in a mixed marriage will have no incentive to transmit his/her own traits and will favour a set of traits, peers and role models from the majority population. Akis, who has suffered discrimination as a minority Muslim, favours the religious affiliation of his child to Christianity as the most appropriate strategy for the child's wellbeing.

"My opinion about the child was that we live here. The child will have issues in the near future… that was my basic problem. There is no reason my child to suffer what I went through, right? Because I felt some things as a kid and I do not want him to feel it as well. It's bad. Why should [the child] be a minority? To put it this way! Why to go with the few and not with the many? Since there is this possibility… And we are not even both Muslims. If we were both Muslims, I would

say ok, maybe it's stupid what we are doing. But from the moment that the possibility exists... you understand... it is more normal for the child anyway."

Mixed faith couples are less likely than couples with the same religious background to emphasise religion in raising their children (Williams and Lawler, 2001). As religious affiliation of children to Christianity occurs mainly as part of a social strategy, there is no religious indoctrination or upbringing within Christian faith in the family context. While mixed faith parents abstain from 'parenting through Christianity', the chain of religious transmission is maintained through religious education at school or other religious nurture. Spiros, Greek Christian, said:

"We don't talk to our children about religions. Our older son learned how to do the prayer at school, we never taught him. We will give him a certain freedom in his state of mind. What we are trying to transmit to him is that there is a God. And he can pray to God in whatever way he wants, neither with specific prayers nor anything else, just talking."

Similarly, Haditse, Turkish Muslim, confirms instilling belief in the existence of God as an essential part of the religious nurture they offer to their children and emphasises the universality of religions in the transmission of moral values. Haditse, said:

"We both try so that the children believe in God, this is our purpose. Beyond that, we believe that all religions pursue the same things, namely not to lie, not to steal, to respect the others. These are common characteristics in all religions."

Although religious faith did not feature prominently as a reason behind the choice of strategy of religious affiliation of children in mixed Christian – Muslim families to Christianity, the parents' respective faith backgrounds still informed the moral and civil values which guided their lives and which they wished to instil in their children. Similar to the findings of Arweck and Nesbitt (2010a), parents often pointed out moral values as common traits to all religions, considering universally applicable guiding principles, such as tolerance, respect, treating others as one would like to be treated oneself, consideration, kindness and altruism.

Muslim children

I have encountered a single case of a mixed family of minority Muslim Roma and Greek Christian background in which the children were affiliated to Islam. The minority Muslim father

determined the religious affiliation of his four children, despite the initial reservations expressed by his wife who wished her children to be christened. Stavroula, the Greek Christian wife, said:

> *"I wanted them to be baptised of course. He didn't want to. So they were not baptised… Ehh what could I do? I accepted it!"*

Stavroula as a Christian Orthodox wife who lives in the extended household with her Muslim in-laws in a segregated Muslim Roma settlement in Western Thrace found herself deprived of negotiating power and influence over the determination of her children's religious affiliation. This family contrary to other mixed minority Muslim – Greek Christian families maintained strong affiliations to the Turkish Muslim ethnic and religious origins in segregative residential conditions. This is the only case in the research sample of a minority Muslim man in a mixed family who transmitted his religious affiliation to his children, while it should be noted that no other minority Muslim passed down their religious affiliation to their children.

Religiously unaffiliated children

In this section, I examine how atheist, agnostic or irreligious parents make decisions about religious and cultural transmissions to their children. I am going to analyse what 'religiously unaffiliated children' means and entails. Exploring if secular parents incorporate religion in the upbringing of their children or whether unaffiliated children are raised in an irreligious family context will contribute to our understanding of religious socialisation. According to Ecklund and Lee (2011), we should remove the assumption that parents engaging in religious socialisation hold religious beliefs themselves. Participants, who chose not to affiliate their children to any institutional religion self-identified as agnostics, atheists, irreligious or apostates from their religious community. These participants were raised in a Muslim or Christian faith background. Their identification as atheist, agnostic or irreligious was the outcome of a conscious choice they made as adults. The participants' decision not to affiliate their children to any institutional religion was not the outcome either of a compromise between conflicting worldviews or of "striking a balance" between extended families, religious communities or ethnic groups. On the contrary, partners found themselves in agreement based on their own secular worldview and their initial resolution to organise their lifestyle beyond the imperatives of a religious system. It is, mostly, atheist, agnostic or irreligious male participants who assert their secular worldviews in their decision not to affiliate their children to any institutional religion and seek their partners' consensus.

The narrative of choice is emphasised by secular parents, who feel that the choices they made for themselves in their personal life cannot be binding for their children, who should be free to develop their own individual religious conscience. In a de-traditionalised context, religious conscience stems from free will, preference and taste. Religiously unaffiliated children are encouraged to consider their options to adopt or to reject their parents' institutional religious affiliations, belief systems and practices. Not choosing or not feeling obliged to choose is posed as an option as well. Yiannis, a Greek, who self-identifies as agnostic, draws on his professional experience as a musician to answer the question on how he is going to explain religious affiliation to his son.

> *"I'm thinking that I will explain to him that to start with he is not obliged to choose, he is not obliged to face such a dilemma. Maybe music helps with that. In the sense that someone may love classical music, jazz and punk music. On the contrary, regarding politics and religion you owe to choose one out of these. Namely, I'm Panathinaikos, means that I'm an opponent of all the rest [football] teams in the same sense that if I'm Christian, I can't be Buddhist or Muslim."*

Atheist and agnostic parents do not inadvertently indoctrinate their children with atheism; they rather expose them to religious ideas so that the children might have the opportunity to make their own decisions about which, if any, religious traditions to belong to (Ecklund and Lee, 2011). Daysam, a Palestinian self-proclaimed atheist, intends to allow his daughter the freedom to decide on her own, but he also acknowledges that both religions, Islam and Christianity will make part of her upbringing.

> *"The child will decide on her own when she grows up. If she wants, if she ever faces such a dilemma anyway… Let it be two religions until she decides that she doesn't want any if she decides to choose."*

It was only religiously indifferent parents who did nothing to either affirm or reject religion in their children's lives (Manning, 2013). Abdalah, a Jordanian of Muslim background who defined both himself and his wife as areligious, describes a rather secular and irreligious family environment in which his children were raised.

> *"My children are not baptised. I never taught Islam to them, never. Neither did I tell them that they should be baptised Christian Orthodox nor did we have any kind of issue. I haven't referred to religion and I haven't implanted any religious spirit in my children. They were not even concerned; they were not discriminated, nothing, nothing…"*

Most of the unaffiliated children of mixed families in the research sample were at pre-school age when interviews were conducted in 2012, and therefore, too young to have decided upon their religious affiliation and to have developed their own religiosity. There were only two cases of mixed families, whose children were in their late 20s or early 30s. When I asked Abdalah, the Jordanian areligious, if his three children had chosen any religious affiliation in their adulthood, he replied laughingly:

"They are free-range. They don't give a damn."

Memetis, a minority Turk who prefers to describe himself as a sceptical or free thinker, elaborated on the current religious affiliations of his two sons and expressed his feelings about the choices that his children had made. The two sons, both residing abroad, formed religiously homogamous families by converting to the religion of their wives. The older son got married to a Catholic woman and converted to Christianity, while the younger one got married to a Muslim woman and converted to Islam.

> *"The children… don't have any problem. My granddaughter is Catholic and my grandson is Muslim. This is to be expected since the parents are of the same religion. […] My older son was baptised Catholic Christian at the age of 24. It did not bother me and it won't bother me. Even better, that's what we say with my wife, "you see? The one son your religion and the other son my religion!" [smiling]. We are kidding. It is good to let the children choose whatever they want in their life."*

In the way relationship dynamics were formed between the family members, the one son developed religious identification with the mother's Christian religion and the other son took after the religious affiliation of his Muslim father. Memetis, even though he advised his sons *"not to wear the crown of religion on their head",* emphasises the narrative of choice and their right to determine their own religious affiliation. Many factors impacted upon the two sons' knowledge and comprehension of religious matters, decision upon their institutional conversion and the extent to which they viewed both religions, Christianity and Islam, as outsiders or insiders. The precise area of overlap between the circles of the parental religiosity, the combined attitude of both parents towards religious issues and relationships between family members can be expressed as stronger emotional attachment and identification with the maternal or paternal religious affiliation. Other factors are the influences from grandparents and extended family, shared religious practices and family activities and young people's exposure to religious settings (Arweck and Nesbitt, 2010b). All these factors were

combined with elements of affective conversion within the two sons' intimate relationships and led to their conversion to produce homogamous family settings.

Secular parents, who express multiple and diverse worldviews that are included within the term "none", share common viewpoints regarding freedom of their children to decide on whether "to choose or not to choose" their religious affiliation (Caballero et al., 2008). Unaffiliated children are exposed to religious ideas so that they may have the opportunity to make their own decisions about to which, if any, religious tradition to belong at a later stage in their life and are not indoctrinated with atheism. Some members of the extended Greek family have expressed objections to the non-affiliation of children to institutional religion and concerns over consequences in the unaffiliated child's social life. However, participants do not report any considerable tensions caused as a result of pressure exercised on them by the extended families. Secular parental couples seem to be consistent with their worldviews and draw on a pool of flexible strategies.

The strategies of religious affiliation and 'parenting through religion' of children in mixed families are characterised by rationality and consistency between parental religious viewpoints and the choices they made in the upbringing of their children. Gender roles emerged strongly in the analysis of religious and cultural affiliations of children in mixed families. It is mostly men in mixed relationships who assert or contest their ethnic, religious and cultural affiliations in transmissions to their children with the consent of their female partner. Gender roles were observed in all three strategies of religious affiliation in mixed faith families. The intersection between gender and power is further complicated in mixed families as a result of minoritisation and stigmatisation processes, especially in mixed Greek Christian – minority Muslim families, where the minority Muslim father contests his own minority religious and ethnic affiliation through the disaffiliation of their children from Muslim communities and their integration within Greek society.

Homogamous families

Families that have become homogamous through the institutional conversion of one partner to the other's religion behave like conservative religious same-faith families. In homogamous families, there is a linear relationship between the religious affiliation of the parents and their children. The affiliation of the children with Islam was posed as a precondition for the mediation of religious differences by conservative religious male Muslims before the wedding took place. Whereas, in some cases the Greek wife converted to Islam two to three years after

the wedding took place, the act of her conversion preceded the birth of the first child. Conversely, the conversion of the Muslim partner to Christianity preceded the wedding so that the wedding could be solemnised with the Christian marital sacrament. All children born in homogamous Christian families were institutionally affiliated with Orthodox Christianity and all children born in homogamous Muslim families were affiliated with Islam respectively. There was a matter-of-fact agreement on affinitive religious identification between parents and their children.

Religious homogamy through conversion attains a solid religious faith system and reinforces the linear transmission of religion to children in a mono-faith family background. In the context of children of migration background, Portes and Rumbaut (2006) argue that certain benefits associated with selective acculturation become apparent, when children continue observing the faith of their parents: there is a common universe of meanings shared across generations, more open channels of communication between the two generations and a system of beliefs and norms antithetical to downward assimilation. Benefits associated with the adaptation and the upbringing of children in mono-faith family are acknowledged by participants. According to Marina, Turkish convert to Christianity:

> *"This is better for the children. I don't think that there is a better thing for the children than to go altogether to the Church or to the Mosque. It's clearly for the children*."

Similarly, Salih, Egyptian Muslim, said:

> *"Of course, it is better when the wife changes religion on her own will, so that the children are not confused."*

Parenting through religion reinforces the salience of the "unique" faith system in the homogamous family. Ryan and Vacchelli (2013) have shown that Islam provided Muslim parents with a code of behaviour, norms and values which clearly influenced their parenting strategies. Similar influences of religious norms and moral values are observed in the parenting strategies of conservative religious Christian parents. The importance of religious upbringing of the children is expressed by Magda, a Greek convert to Islam,

> "*Religion forms the personal character, the respect for others, and the love to the ultimate which is God.*"

The salience of religion in parenting is corroborated by the solid affiliation with religion, the piety, reverence and practice of faith within the family context. Furthermore, the process of

conversion has stimulated intensification of faith, commitment to religious practice and consolidation of religious identity. Even though a narrative of choice did not make part of the religious discourse of homogamous families, parents wanted their children to acquire knowledge on religions so that they could develop their own judgement in multicultural encounters. Amrida, Indian Muslim, reflects on the importance of acquiring information on religions and having a solid religious affiliation.

> *"I think my children should know and require information about religion… and religions in general because they are going to meet other people when they grow up. I'd like them to know more about religion than I knew at their age in order to have enough information and then to know what to do with it when they grow up."*

Homogamous parents describe their children as strongly affiliated to their affinitive religion and practicing actively within their faith. The case of Smaro offers an interesting example. As we have seen in the previous chapter, Smaro described the conversion of her minority Muslim-born husband as *"an opportunity to turn a heterodox into Christian".* Smaro raised her son within a pious Christian Orthodox family background with the prospect of becoming a priest.

> *"He was going to the Church since he has been a small child… he has been an altar server… he was going to be a priest. However, he saw something or he heard something and he told me: "You will never find out. I love priesthood, I respect that, I will be a theologian but I won't become a priest. I will disappoint you mum."*

His decision to become a theologian and not a priest is expressed as a disappointment to the expectations of his conservative religious Christian mother. The ethnic and cultural traits of the minority Muslim-born father were deliberately suppressed and the child was raised in a mono-cultural conservatively religious family context. This is an extreme case of conservative religious indoctrination to Christianity. Even though parenting through religion is endorsed in homogamous families, their children are still exposed to 'multiple-mixing' ethnic and cultural affiliations within extended families and through social exchanges.

'Multiple-mixing' upbringing

The strategies that parents from different ethnic and faith backgrounds employ to foster a sense of belonging through religious affiliation have broader implications on how these parents

bring their children up and pass on aspects of heritage across the generations. The decision that parents make to affiliate their children to a single religion or to no religion does not exclude the practice of bringing them up in multi-ethnic and multi-faith environments. Upbringing reveals the complexities of 'multiple-mixing' where race and ethnicity may overlap with faith, as well as issues of raising children in mixed ethnicity or mixed faith families (Edwards and Caballero, 2008).

Children of mixed faith background do not form one-dimensional ethno-cultural identities. They are raised as bilingual or multilingual and bi-ethnic or multi-ethnic. These are children who experience multiple cultures and develop "multiple cultural competences" (Jackson and Nesbitt, 1993, cited in Arweck and Nesbitt, 2010a). Children in mixed Christian – Muslim families acquired a wide repertoire of cultural competences. Most parents perceived them as more open-minded and enriched with more knowledge and experiences compared to their peers from single-faith families. Mixed faith families promoted broader, stronger social and cognitive skill sets, as well as personal strengths such as cultural adaptation, intercultural effectiveness, greater interpersonal flexibility, and less ethnocentric attitudes which may better prepare them to be exposed to cultural and religious diversity in adulthood (Bisin and Verdier, 2000; Petts and Knoester, 2007). Marina, Turkish convert to Christianity, said:

> *"Our daughter passed to the stage that she sees the second nationality as an advantage. For example when children come from Turkey she will go ahead to help them. Her attitude is different. She has travelled more, she has seen more things and she sees things more positive as she grows up. She perceives more things than a child of her age."*

Even if the decision about the nominal religion is taken on the basis of no faith or one faith, the religious upbringing may be differentiated from the strong identification with a single religious affiliation. This holds true also for children who are raised in mono-faith homogamous families when they come in contact with the extended Christian or Muslim family. Religious conversion does not pay off for ethnic affiliations and cultural diversity. Many Muslim parents whose children were affiliated to Christianity wish to transmit part of their Islamic faith and tradition to their children. Children of mixed background are still exposed to multiple practices and societal influences through their extended families, school environment and places of worship. Yiannis recalls how fascinated his pre-school age son seemed with religious chants both at the Mosque in Istanbul and at the Christian Church.

"There was a mosque close to the house where we were staying in Istanbul and he listened to the Hotza who chanted the Koran… and we have been twice to the Church. When he listened to the chants or he saw the ceremony, he stayed very quiet and was fascinated with the priests' vestments. However, as far as perception is concerned and especially the difference of these things, I think it will take longer."

Children of intermarriages are not only 'mobile' across places but move through social roles associated with childhood in particular places (Zeitlyn and Mand, 2012). Children in mixed families are raised in family networks and settings entirely permeated by people, resources and social remittances (Levitt, 1998; Levitt and Lamba-Nieves, 2011) that are shared across borders. Children learn multiple cultural and religious practices within the extended families, sometimes at a very young age by way of mimesis. Meni, Greek agnostic, describes how her religiously unaffiliated daughter was imitating Islamic prayer while playing with her cousins when they visited Palestine.

"…the grandma, the grandpa and the rest of the in-law family pray 5 times per day [in Palestine]… the little nephew sees his grandma and he wears her scarf and he sits down and does Allah…Allah [laughing]… my daughter was playing with her cousins and also learned, but we are glad with that… it seems nice to us that she takes something from there and she can also learn something from here, to learn both; that's what I would like both as culture and as knowledge…"

Grandparents play a considerable role in transmitting part of their culture and religion to the grandchildren. In mixed families, grandparents often make formative efforts for the religious nurture of their grandchildren, especially when the mother is of different religion than her children. Alekos, Greek Christian of mixed parentage, recalls:

"Ever since I was little, grandma would take me and my sister to the Church since my mum couldn't take us… we used to go."

Amer, Palestinian atheist, points out that the extended families need to support the mixed couples in the formative effort of their children and refrain from influencing children towards one specific faith or culture.

"It takes understanding from parents both mine and hers that our children will be different than the rest, they won't be the children that will have one single identity

and point that out more; they are the children with double identities and they are trying to experience both."

Muslim or unaffiliated children have the right to be exempted from religious education at Greek schools with parental consent. The parental attitudes on the issue of religious education at school are complex. While Muslim children participate in all school activities and learn to make the Morning Prayer, they are advised by their parents to abstain from making the cross sign. Minority Muslim children, in general, do not attend the religious education class. Some parents of Muslim or irreligious background say that they do not object to their children attending the religious class, while others describe it as catechism and propaganda and they would prefer their children either to abstain consciously or to make a choice on their own whether they want to attend or not. Both Muslim and secular parents share common concerns regarding the one-dimensional mono-religious and mono-cultural identity promoted within the Greek educational system.

Some participants have voiced concerns over the difficulties of transmission of religiosity by parents with different faith identifications. Identification with a single religious affiliation may be undermined through 'multiple-mixed' upbringing and under the influence of the social environment. According to Froese (2008), children in Christian – Muslim families reveal a silent deficit through the problems of verbalising their own belief, the lack of lucidity in formulating religious questions and the potential rivalry of parental religions; they are often torn between two different systems and ideologies. Katerina, a conservative Greek Christian, said:

"It is the same to me if one parent is Christian and the other is Muslim and you make the child either Christian or Muslim. Here he will become Christian... However, he will see that his father does not go to the Church, goes to the mosque and prays there. He will see this diversity. It is a big… deal! The child will be confused. You are harming the child. What you are asking is difficult…"

Katerina's concerns over confusing or harming the child, what Froese (2008) called "child grief", leads to failure of every strategy of religious affiliation either with Christianity or Islam. Diversity or mixedness is thus turned into a problem within the mixed faith family. However, it should be noted that these concerns are expressed by prospective parents. Parents in homogamous Muslim families living in Greece do not share any concerns about their children's religiosity. They do not feel threatened by their children's participation in Christian traditional festivities, by adorning the Christmas tree or following the religious class at school. They do not express any fear about their children disaffiliating from the Muslim faith community or share

concerns that their children are confused by participating in family social and religious practices.

Institutional religious affiliation is an “either… or” choice that crosscuts the ethno-cultural worlds, but cultures, ethnicities, languages, practices and worldviews can be blended together within extended families and across borders. Children in Christian – Muslim families develop multiple cultural competences under the formative efforts of their grandparents, through parental religious nurture and religious education at school and through diverse social interactions.

Naming practices

Traditional naming practices reflect a form of collective affiliation to family, ethnicity and culture. I approach name conferral as an attempt to construct ethnic and religious affiliations and as a strategic choice of identity management. Named-for-kin conventions are not only a demonstration of affection and respect, but also a way of perpetuating bonds, authority relations and resource obligations down the generations (Edwards and Caballero, 2008). Naming reciprocates benefits perceived or conferred (Herzfeld, 1982). Name-giving may be seen as the hallmark for the constitution of a new ‘familial self’ through symbolic and pragmatic inter-generational bonds of continuity among members of the same kindred (Tsimouris, 1997).

Civil naming is the exclusive administrative procedure for the neonate’s name acquisition. Instead, registration of baptism has the sole effect of the inclusion of religion on the birth certificate and does not affect the already registered name. However, it has been long embedded within Greek conscience that Christian baptism results in the acquisition of name and religion simultaneously, even though the registration of baptism and the registration of the name are two separate bureaucratic procedures. It is a Greek tradition not to call the new-born baby with a name until the name is pronounced by the priest at the baptism. Until the baptism that usually takes place within the first year, a child is called ‘baby’ as it is not a full member of the community of Christians, hence of Greek society; thus, with the baptism, the baby acquires both name and identity and becomes an individual (Hirschon, 1989).

Administrative issues for the registration of birth of unaffiliated children to the Municipality registry have still not been resolved in the Greek bureaucratic mechanism. Civil servants are not familiar with the name giving procedure, do not comprehend that name giving is a

compulsory procedure independent of the act of baptism and often urge parents to address the courts (Greek Ombudsman, 2006a; 2006b). Memetis, a minority Muslim, faced severe bureaucratic issues in the 1980s for the registration of his children to the Municipality agency that were resolved through judicial judgement.

> *"It was not like "come on, signed and done". It's true that you face problems… in Greek reality, right? Because some things were obviously in a vacuum. Fortunately or unfortunately, we will put up with these things in Greece. We can't do otherwise"*.

This longstanding confusion between name acquisition through registration and religious affiliation through baptism has been sustained by legislative provisions that required the proof of a baptismal certificate for numerous administrative acts, such as the registration of a child at primary school. This provision has only been abolished recently after the enrolment of increasing numbers of immigrant children in the Greek educational system. Name acquisition through administrative registration of unaffiliated children is a very recent trend in Greek society that is not widely practiced yet.

For many generations, baptismal names have been chosen after the Saints most revered by the Greek Orthodox Church. Although Greek language is a rich source of ancient Greek names, some Christian names are most commonly pronounced. According to Herzfeld (1982), Greek baptismal names were never admitted to be the result of pure whim or to be based on aesthetic criteria of euphony, inventiveness or idiosyncratic aptness, but they are pragmatically used as indices of social linkage. Even though some aspects of naming practices may be regional or guided by local rules and traditions, the general named-for-kin convention rule in Greece is to name the first-born child after paternal grandparent usually of the same sex and the second-born child after maternal grandparent, respectively.

A similar gendered tradition is practiced in the Arab countries where most Muslim participants came from. Meni, a Greek agnostic, describes the Palestinian custom of name transmission across the generations and how she and her husband accommodated cultural and pragmatic practices in the strategic choices they made for their daughter:

> *"There is a custom in Palestine, children don't take after the grandparents' names as it happens in Greece… when a male child grows up, around 10-12 years old, they start calling him, the father of somebody, namely they give him the name of his son… and his father wanted to honour my husband and granted him his name in order to give it to his son. When I was pregnant… they thought that they will call*

him Mohammed… but after all, the child was a girl and his mum took the chance and said: "come on you will name her after me" [laughing]. We thought to give her my mum's name as well because you never know where she will grow up and whether she will want to make a career here [in Greece] or there [in Palestine] or elsewhere, therefore it's good to have a choice and we see."

"When we got married we had to decide the surname that the children will bear; and because at this moment we had no idea that they were going to ask us this question, a mini-conference took place and we ended up giving both surnames to get done with it".

This narrative reveals a complex naming strategy that compiles many elements according to affinitive traditions (maternal and paternal same-sex grandparent), ethnicity (Palestinian and Greek) and gender, right of choice and adaptability to societal context. Their strategy ended up in the conferral of two names and two surnames that, however indicating egalitarian power relationships, mixes ethnic and cultural affiliations. As Waters (1989) points out, the use of surnames as an indicator of ethnic ancestry for children of intermarried couples may be inaccurate and incomplete.

In homogamous, single-faith families, mono-cultural Arabic or Christian names are proclaimed accordingly. However, in mixed faith families, baptismal names usually follow traditional kinship affiliations in conformity with the norms of the host culture and country of residence. Wishing to protect the children from social exclusion, discrimination or differentiation from other children and racism, most mixed families did not turn to neutral options (international names or multiple names) but they preferred to give them names, which are consistent with the local traditions and acceptable for the ethnic majority (Nazarska and Hajdinjak, 2010:18). The use of international or Greek names is shown as a tendency of balancing different claims and traditions to find a mutual acceptable solution in multicultural surroundings (Lauth Bacas, 2000). Bestowing a single Greek name or two names denoting two ethnicities seems to be a matter of personal taste. While Haditse, Turkish Muslim, thinks that two names pose unnecessary complications at various life stages and thereby she does not "make space for Turkish cultural affiliations" (Petronoti and Papagaroufali, 2006), other participants consider that the strategy of double naming offers choice, flexibility and adaptation in identity management. As Amer, Palestinian atheist, said:

"I've seen that most couples give two names to their children… for example Ayshe Georgia… when they are in Greece they call her only Georgia and when they go to

Palestine they call her Ayshe…... if we give Islam as religion, then we will give him a Greek name… do we confuse it this way? Will it be ok? I don't know."

Name conferral makes a statement about the recipient's identity while the subsequent use of the name in address and in reference implies the degree to which that identity is acknowledged or challenged by others (Herzfeld, 1982). The use of both Greek and Arabic names in address and the use of the name in reference according to social, ethnic and geographical designators indicate context specific power relationships. Being addressed with a different name according to the family, society or country one finds herself in reinforces the extent to which names denote a sense of belonging. Amer's proposed naming strategy compensating for religious affiliation to Islam with cultural affinities through the conferral of Greek name indicates extraction of the name from the religious context or in other words, the choice of name that does not denote religious affiliation in reference.

The choice of children's names in Greece is not solely a matter of identity; it adheres to family continuity, property transfer and rights of inheritance (Hirschon, 1989). Property is usually inherited between adjacent generations, while names are passed down in alternate generations (Herzfeld, 1982). The following example of Alekos, a Greek Christian from mixed faith family, is an exception to this rule with both name and property being passed down from the grandfather to the grandchild as the father was sanctioned with disinheritance because he married a Muslim woman against his father's desire.

"Now my grandpa was partisan, he fought in the mountains… he disinherited my father because he married a Muslim woman… But my grandpa loved me and left me some property, just for me from my grandpa… while my grandpa didn't have any problem [with me marrying a Muslim woman], he had with my mum."

Despite the prevalence of traditional affinitive naming practices, there is a lot of space for the expression of personal taste, individual preferences about international, neutral or personalised names that reveal emotional attachments and lifestyle choices. Name conferral through administrative name acquisition offers new possibilities for innovation and production of reconfigured cultural practices. Aesthetic criteria of euphony, inventiveness and idiosyncratic aptness are re-signified within contemporary de-traditionalised non-religious processes. New forms of personal taste and innovation have started prevailing over kinship and ethnic affinities. One way this may be expressed is through the notion of being cosmopolitan, where the children's mixedness is seen as enabling them to activate flexible belonging to multiple cultural, ethnic or faith social fields. Parents see their children's mixedness as enabling them to

be ‘citizens of the world’ who are often able to fit in or identify with other communities and cultures (Caballero et al., 2008). Yiannis, Greek agnostic, describes the criteria of multicultural inclusion and easy pronunciation according to which he chose a rare Turkish name for his son.

> *“His name is Persian, which means the roof of the world. It’s a rare name in Turkey. The criterion was to be a name that has something from the “other culture”, since my surname is clearly Christian. Namely, to be able to juxtapose both elements and to be able to pronounce from a young age both in Greek and in Turkish. Not to have delta, theta, gamma that Turks cannot pronounce and respectively, not to have ö, ü that we cannot pronounce.”*

Parents reflect on the issue of identification as they become more responsible for their children’s “project of self” that encompasses multiple mixtures. Emphasis on easy pronunciation of international names is often linked to space and social mobility in the context of globalisation. Memetis, a minority Muslim, “takes pride in” having reformed names for his two sons that were “matching and fitting”. His sons maintained these names even after they converted to the religion of their choice.

> *“In principle, we gave them names that were matching. My older son is named after the mountains Sinai. My younger son was named with a refugee name. Let them wonder what it means! Their names and surname remained the same [after their conversions]… My older son did not change his name when he was baptised because it was fitting.”*

A shift from custom to taste and individual choice is said to apply to religious names as a result of urbanisation and individualism speeding up the effects of the internal process mechanisms under the cultural surface (Lieberson, 2000). A consequence of the individualisation and de-traditionalisation thesis is that the significance and benefits of kinship- and religion-based, or other traditionally affinitive naming practices will wane further in Greek society.

Conclusion

Strategies of religious affiliation of children in mixed Christian - Muslim families are socially and culturally assertive behaviours based on the combined attitude of both parents. Affiliating children with Orthodox Christian religion in conformity with the dominant culture in Greece is the prevalent practice. The affiliation of children to the Christian Orthodox religion is part of a

social strategy that does not entail 'parenting through Christianity'. A single case of children in a mixed minority Muslim Roma – Greek Christian family affiliated to Islam shows that the chain of transmission of Islam is traced in the Muslim minority communities in Western Thrace. A Muslim minority father in a mixed marriage has successfully transmitted his own religious, ethnic and cultural affiliations, while other Muslim minority parents have dealt with disaffiliation of their children from Islam as an opportunity to avoid the stigma attached to minority status and integrate them within Greek society. Religiously unaffiliated children are exposed to religious nurture so that they may have the choice to take their own informed decisions. In homogamous families, there was a matter-of-fact agreement on affinitive religious identification between parents and their children. Parenting through religion reinforced the transmission of religion to children in a mono-faith family background. Religion provided homogamous parents with a code of behaviour, norms and values which clearly influenced their parenting strategies.

Assessing parenting strategies, we observe that there is consistency between parental religiosity and the choice of strategy of religious affiliation and upbringing of their children. Parental choices of names, also, reveal social processes of belonging across ethnic, cultural and religious affiliations. This re-signifies the traditional or gendered customs, through the investment of name conferral as strategic choices of identity management. Despite the prevalence of traditional affinitive naming practices, there is a lot of space for the expression of personal taste, individual preferences about international, neutral or personalised names that reveal emotional attachments and lifestyle choices.

Children of mixed faith families are exposed to 'multiple-mixing' upbringing within extended families and through religious education at school. They develop multiple cultural competences and are integrated within Greek society. Despite prevalent tendencies of conformity to social and gender norms, there is flexibility of choices and strategies according to preferences and personal taste within Greek society. In the next chapter, I will discuss the integration of mixed families within Greek society, discrimination, racism and xenophobia in the circumstances of economic crisis in contemporary Greece and diffusion of Christian – Muslim mixedness in transnational and translocal networks.

Chapter 7

Integration and social visibility of mixed families in Greece

Mixed families live, reside and locate themselves within specific socioeconomic contexts in Greece. The social visibility of mixed families that cross ethnic, religious and symbolic borders are constructed through certain social and phenotypical characteristics, such as nationality, religion, class, gender and race. Social resistance to intermarriage and phenomena of racism, xenophobia and discrimination affect, especially, highly visible Muslim migrants, minority Muslims and Greeks who have transcended boundaries through intermarriage. The economic and humanitarian crisis in Greece, with the subsequent escalation of racism, xenophobia and violence against immigrants and minorities, impacts on the wellbeing of mixed families.

Mixed families, simultaneously, belong to multiple transnational or translocal social and family fields. Transnational kinship and friendship groups emerge in transnational social spaces arising from migration (Faist, 2000). By the term transnational kith and kin relationships, I refer to sustained social and family ties, exchanges, affiliations and care obligations of low institutionalised form or informal nature between members of the extended families, kinship groups, friends and acquaintances across the borders. Transnational family and social relationships diffuse the paradigm of mixed relationships in transnational social fields.

The intersection between intermarriage and integration in Greek society

There are different lifestyle patterns of multilevel being, living and belonging of mixed couples in Greek society. The ways in which mixed couples organise their living differ significantly; each pattern demonstrates the integration dynamics of mixed or homogamous relationships in the host society. Integration must be understood as a multidimensional process that refers to labour, education, and housing, but also to sociocultural arenas such as religion, gender equality, and identity (Rodríguez-García, 2015). Mixed couples in Greece exhibited varying degrees of social and cultural capital acquisition in terms of language skills, socioeconomic characteristics, education, housing conditions and social, legal and political embeddedness.

Second language acquisition, skills and proficiency are a form of human capital that positively affect the integration of immigrants, their earnings and their labour market opportunities (Van Tubergen and Kalmijn, 2005). Language fluency of immigrants is associated with marital status and family (Chiswick et al., 2005). Greek was the main language of communication of most mixed couples and most intermarried migrants had very high language proficiency. Some migrants in mixed relationships had acquired excellent Greek language skills. These were migrants, who came to study in Greece, permanent migrants who had been residing in Greece for many years before meeting their current partner and two Turkish female marriage migrants, who had already been in Greece for many years. Recent marriage migrants, however, exhibited low level of language acquisition.

Muslim migrants in religiously homogamous families, whose wives had been acculturated to the minority culture, also, showed lower language proficiency. Language acquisition and proficiency correspond to "work cultures" and the degree of interaction with the native population. Fahruk, a Saudi Arabian Muslim, who runs a convenience store with Arabic food products and his clientele network consists mainly of Arab Muslims, had only basic Greek language communication skills after 25 years of residence in the host society. On the contrary, Kaihan, an Afghan refugee, had mastered the Greek language during the years of his residence in Greece, and has been working as an interpreter. However, we should understand linguistic integration strategies in a broader bidirectional sense, when intermarriage's ethno-cultural differences mean a beneficial multicultural effect for the native partner (Rodríguez-García et al., 2015).

It is widely acknowledged that exogamous marriages tend to happen between people of higher socioeconomic and educational levels (Kalmijn, 1998; Qian and Lichter, 2007). Spouses tend to marry others with similar educational level, whether within or outside their group (Song, 2009). Kalmijn (1991) observes a shift from religious background to education with marriages being heterogeneous with respect to religion and homogeneous with respect to education. Most mixed couples exhibited similar education level either at the higher ranks of graduate and postgraduate studies or at the lower ranks of elementary education. However, there were three couples in the research sample that exhibited discrepancies regarding their level of education. In the first case, Anna, who is a Greek Christian woman with postgraduate studies is in a cohabiting relationship with Kaihan, an Afghan refugee who graduated from the Greek adult high school. Anna and Kaihan are colleagues at work. Kaihan had accumulated linguistic skills and cultural capital and had achieved upward mobility in the receiving country. In the second case, Vicky, a Greek convert to Islam, with post-doctoral studies is married to Hassan, a Syrian refugee who has concluded primary education. Vicky and Hassan have now

settled in the UK, where Vicky pursues an academic career and Hassan is employed in the construction industry. In the third case, Zoitsa, a Greek Christian woman, possibly of Christian Roma background, who was working as a teacher, was in a cohabiting relationship with Alis, a minority Muslim Roma. Alis had received some primary education at the minority school in Turkish language and his skills in Greek language were poor.

Five Christian – Muslim families between Greek citizens of minority and majority status are highly integrated and assimilated in Greek society. In these cases, intermarried minority Muslims were, also, linguistically integrated in Greek society. Nevertheless, some other cases of intermarriage in the Western Thrace region differ considerably in their socioeconomic characteristics and their integration within the dominant Greek society. In these ethnic and religious cross-border relationships, Greeks with Christian background with low cultural and social capital have chosen to settle down in Roma settlements through either intermarriage or long-term cohabitation.

The socioeconomic characteristics of mixed couples are contingent upon the economic conditions that have occurred in Greece as the result of the deepening economic and humanitarian crisis. It is difficult to appreciate the effect of the economic crisis on mixed couples in Greece, even though there is evidence that since 2011, immigrants have been affected by the economic crisis in terms of employment more negatively than the native Greek population (Hatziprokopiou, 2015). On the assessment of income, education and occupation, participants could be characterised as of low to middle socioeconomic status. These are families that "make ends meet", which is a feeling that the majority of families share in crisis-ridden Greece. Mixed couples may have more choices to settle in Greece or to migrate and may prove more adjustable to socioeconomic conditions. Mixed couples have developed linguistic, cultural and social skills that can be transferred in multiple transnational social fields. When I was conducting fieldwork in 2012, I was advised to 'hurry up' because mixed couples were immigrating to the countries of origin of the Muslim husband. In follow-up communications with some of the couples I had met during fieldwork, some mixed couples had already migrated to other mostly European countries due to financial difficulties and high unemployment rates in Greece. Tugba, Turkish Muslim, was the first to advise me that financial survival and sustenance issues are more important than religion in the context of everyday life of mixed couples.

> *"You are asking questions about religion in Muslim and Christian Orthodox marriage. I think now, for the people, economy is more important, not religion.*

Everybody is asking us, "Your wife is Turkish, why don't you go to Turkey? They have a good economy there".

Immigrants in mixed relationships tend to benefit from their relationship with a native partner in navigating the bureaucratic structures of the host society (Rodríguez-García et al., 2015). Aggravated by the economic crisis, especially since 2009, Greece has become renowned in Europe for its collapsed asylum system, which is characterised by inappropriate processing of the applications and severe delays in issuance of documents for hundreds of thousands of irregular immigrants and asylum seekers (Triandafyllidou et al., 2014). Greece is, also, known for its poor bureaucratic mechanism and dysfunctional public sector, insufficient legal framework regulating irregular migration, discriminatory, racist, xenophobic and preferential attitudes by police and public authorities. As we have already seen, a wedding can be the means of facilitating bureaucratic procedures for the acquisition or renewal of residence permits for immigrants and refugees and avoidance of time-consuming bureaucratic procedures. Depending on the precariousness of the legal status of the undocumented migrant or refugee, the Greek partner had a positive influence on the legal or citizenship status of the migrant partner. Migrants face multiple difficulties in their interactions with public authorities, but being married to a Greek citizen can facilitate bureaucratic procedures. Stefanos, said:

"There is some problem when they see the Turkish passport, but this is a matter of the employee; it is not a legal issue. They pull an angry face but we are saved by me being Greek. When we go, for example, to the tax office for our business and I have her passport and it is obvious that she is Muslim, you can see it on the employee that she gets upset. But the employee takes my identity card and sees that she is a Greek citizen's wife and he/she does the work immediately."

Many Muslim migrant participants say that they notice a change of attitude in their interactions with civil servants or police officers when they can prove that they are married to a Greek citizen. Hassan, a Syrian asylum seeker, narrates the following incident at the airport.

"I was going nuts and I say "what's the problem? I took this certificate because I got married to a Greek". Hopefully I had all papers on me, wedding certificate, family status certificate, registration act. And I started taking out all the papers, the one after the other. She could see that all the papers were right and she said "ok sir, that's enough". "No, I have more if you want to" [laughing]. Yes, the tone of the voice changes considerably. This is bad in Greece!"

Greek partners had positive influence, also, in the interactions of minority Muslims with public authorities. Even though all Muslim Roma participants are Greek citizens, they suffered discrimination from local administrative authorities. Antonis denounced the discriminating treatment by municipal authorities on two occasions. First, the refusal to issue a civil wedding license on the grounds of religious difference and, second, the refusal to issue a farmers' market vendor permit. Both municipal acts impacted on their socioeconomic position and perpetuated a situation of social exclusion. Antonis, said:

> *"I never discerned races in my life; I never found racism on my way. But when I met her I understood what racism is… They wouldn't give me a place at the flea market because the permit was under her name. If I hadn't been so tough, we wouldn't overcome these… many problems…"*

Participants empirically observe that there is increase in interethnic, interreligious and interracial marriages and they have, also, noticed some changes regarding the level of acceptance of intermarriage in Greece. Erato, Muslim Roma, comments on the increase of mixed marriages between "her own people" and Greek people and notes laughingly: *"Our story would make a good scenario for TV series".* Lower level of prejudice is associated with watching TV shows that portray intergroup contact (Schiappa et al., 2006). In urban centres, migrant partners in mixed relationships encounter a social context that is more tolerant of ethnic diversity compared to small cities or rural areas. On the other hand, more risks and precariousness are associated with urban centres, where racist attacks have alarmingly increased with the political legitimisation of the neo-Nazi 'Golden Dawn' party that incites physical assaults on individuals, leaflets against 'the Islamisation' of Greece and attacks on mosques (Hatziprokopiou and Evergeti, 2014). In this exceptional quote, Yiannis, Greek, epitomises the concurrence of educational homogamy, social visibility, integration and resistance towards intermarriage in contemporary Greek society.

> *"You know the most interesting for me will be when the term "intercultural or interracial relationship" will be an integral part in society and not only restricted to academia or research. Greek society has started seeing and getting familiar, but I'm not sure whether [intermarriage] has been integrated within Greek society, to be honest. I think that big cities experience that now with immigration. Western Thrace certainly is an interesting case because here multicultural society is an old story. Surely not "mixed". On the other hand, a part of Greek society goes towards the extreme of nationalism, fascism and violence. Both coexist simultaneously."*

Intermarriage is far from being accepted as a norm but has acquired recognition and acknowledgement through increasing social visibility. Despite resistance, conservatism and racism, there is permissiveness, tolerance and an inalienable intimate space for personal choices in Greek society. Mixed couples experience different levels of safe or precarious living. In the next section, I shall examine precariousness of living and existential insecurity that indigenous and migrant, ethnic and racial groups suffered due to discrimination, xenophobia and social visibility.

Discrimination, xenophobia and social visibility in crisis-ridden Greece

The phenomenon of discrimination and xenophobia against migrants and minorities and resistance, sanctions and barriers to intermarriage are located within specific socio-political contexts. The positionality and social visibility of migrants and minorities are constructed through specific characteristics such as nationality, class, religion, gender and skin colour. In this section, I am going to examine discrimination and xenophobia against intermarried migrants and partners belonging to minorities with specific ethnic, religious and racial characteristics. The analytical emphasis is focused on highly visible migrants (e.g. East Asian Muslims), Greek converts to Islam, Muslim Roma and Greek – Turkish couples.

With the onset of the economic crisis in 2009, xenophobia, racial violence and incidences of physical injuries against migrants escalated substantially (Baldwin-Edwards, 2014; Triandafyllidou et al., 2014; Triandafyllidou and Kouki, 2013). My research data collection was conducted in 2012, when violence against migrants was on the rise, but it preceded the Syrian refugee crisis. Third country nationals, including asylum seekers, refugees and irregular migrants were increasingly attacked, mainly by members of right wing groups that identify with the 'Golden Dawn' political party (Kirtsoglou, 2013; Triandafyllidou et al., 2014). The nationalities most affected by the violence are Afghans, Somali and Pakistanis (Baldwin-Edwards, 2014; Triandafyllidou et al., 2014), but in reality it affects every person who is not – or does not *seem* to be Greek (Kirtsoglou, 2013). Police 'sweeping up' and securitisation operations have also targeted everyone who appears to be foreign (Dalakoglou, 2013). According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, a series of criminal attacks has been directed against foreigners based on criteria such as the colour of skin, the geo-cultural and geopolitical origin and religion (Triandafyllidou et al., 2014).

The escalation of racism, xenophobia and violence against immigrants during the years of the economic recession in Greece is a source of concern for Muslim participants and their partners. Through different forms of structural exclusion, marginalisation and social visibility defined as the everyday practices of seeing and being seen, migrants have negotiated a tense presence between visibility and invisibility in Greek cities (Baird, 2014). This tense presence between visibility and invisibility in public space affects the lives of the mixed families. Polina narrates that she was afraid about her husband's safety because of the incidences of violence against migrants in central Athens and in many occasions, she had advised him not to go out of the house.

> *I told him "don't go today… don't go to Omonia [central square in Athens]… don't take the bus" because I was afraid. [...] He met people from 'Golden Dawn' on the train, in the tube, on the bus but they don't understand he is Egyptian. Police don't understand he is Egyptian, they think that he is Greek because of his face. That's ok… if he had darker skin…"*

Migrants often come across members of the Golden Dawn party on the streets or in public transportation means or interact with them at work. Members of the Golden Dawn party usually are highly visible as they are dressed in black attire that bears the emblem of the political party, they usually carry Greek flags with them and are discerned by their distinctive masculine characteristics. The Egyptian husband moves between visibility and invisibility in the encounters with members of the Golden Dawn party or the police as his traits do not render his migrant background and ethnic origin overtly visible. Fear restricts his mobility in central locations in the Greek capital of Athens, while it also affects his thoughts about living in Greece in a mixed relationship. Polina and her Egyptian husband often discuss about their plans to migrate to another European country.

Asian Muslims, in particular, have experienced racism very strongly due to visibility and exposure as foreign migrants that render them targets to racist comments and hate attacks. Kaihan, an Afghan asylum seeker, said:

> *"They have already killed people in Athens. I'm a foreigner; they will hurt me very easily. Now there are elected political parties, 'Chrysi Avgi' [Golden Dawn]. Everybody has become like Hitler here. I wonder how some Greeks, how some people can be racists about skin colour!"*

Kaihan describes eloquently an interaction with work colleagues, who are members or supporters of the Golden Dawn party.

"I have met people from 'Golden Dawn'; some policemen I got to know from work. I didn't know that they are from 'Golden Dawn' and I stayed with them. They didn't harm me and they can't harm me; these are some people with whom we have to collaborate at work. They told me "come, we will take you to our group to see". I asked them "will I come back alive or not?" "No, no you will come as a friend". "I'm not a friend" I said "a black person and a white person cannot become friends… according to the way you are thinking. How can that happen?" "No, you are not one of those black people, you are dark-skinned". Again, I said, "didn't you kill dark-skinned people in Athens?"

Kaihan works for the Ministry of Public Order at a police department close to the Greek - Turkish land border across the Evros River, which used to be the main cross route for the bulk of irregular migration and asylum seeking refugees towards Europe (Triandafyllidou et al., 2014). These policemen who have identified themselves as members or supporters of the Golden Dawn party come in regular contact with irregular migrants upon their arrival at the Greek - Turkish border, while Kaihan acts as an interpreter between migrants and public authorities in the regional asylum office that functions within the local reception centre. This is yet another incident documenting the interconnections of the Greek police with Golden Dawn and the intrusion and infiltration of the ultra-right extreme into the Hellenic Police (Christopoulos, 2014; Tsimouris, 2015). Kaihan is invited by his colleagues at the police to join them at a meeting of the local Golden Dawn party group. Even though the motives behind this invitation are unclear, Kaihan questions if he will be safe to attend this meeting and he is reaffirmed that he will attend as their friend. The contact and interactions between them leads to the de-categorisation of "those black people" and thus, the Asian Muslim colleague is perceived as a "dark-skin" person that will enjoy protection "as their friend".

Prejudices negatively influence the wellbeing of mixed couples (Cottrell, 1990). Fear about integration and safety in Greece can impact on the decision to make a family and have children. Kaihan expressed that he is deeply concerned about racism and he is afraid to raise children in Greece. Concerns over their personal and their family's safety indicate a precarious being of immigrants in Greece and show deeper ontological insecurity about the prospects of belonging and integrating within Greek society. Kaihan, said:

"Greece was something yesterday, today it's something else. And the way I think about it today, I'm afraid to have children and to live and to raise children here. It's hard."

Discrimination, xenophobia and racism are related to the state of being foreigner. Moving between visibility and invisibility affects everyone who does not seem to be Greek (Kirtsoglou, 2013) or who appears to be a foreigner (Dalakoglou, 2013). Participants repeatedly respond with the phrase: *"It is not only the religion, it is just being a foreigner"*. Vicky, a Greek convert to Islam, married to a Syrian Muslim, said:

> *"I'm not mentioning religious choice, I'm mentioning social choice. I did have an issue with "you are with the foreigner, or you are looking like a foreigner or you have taken the choice to be with a foreigner"".*

Greek citizens, who seem as outsiders due to their appearance or because they wear distinctive religious symbols or attire, are equally treated as foreigners and are affected by maltreatment and discrimination in their interactions with public authorities, public agencies and police. Greek converts to Islam appear as outsiders because they transcend symbolic boundaries across Greek nationality and Muslim religion. Vicky narrates an incident when she suffered bullying and maltreatment at a public agency in Athens.

> *"I've been bullied at a public agency. I burst into tears. They insulted me so badly. They connected my appearance to a foreigner. I was abused in the system. You know how things are with foreigners in Greece plus I'm very white and fair so they assumed that I'm some kind of Polish or Russian immigrant who comes and takes the jobs of other people. […] In 2010 I had a very hard time [in Greece]. I was shocked. It was not the Greece I knew… no humanity… people were so pissed off about everything. I was attacked because I was wearing a turban. How provocative can that be for the average Greek? And I was wearing a shirt, earrings, belt… I am very disappointed."*

Magda, a Greek convert to Islam, also narrates an incident at a central train station in Athens, when she was involved in an argument with some migrants who were fighting and had to run away when they called the police. This incident shows an interesting interplay between Greek nationality and Muslim religion.

> *"I was with some Muslim friends. It was Friday and we had been at a Mosque and bad luck for me… and I say bad luck for me because I was dressed accordingly, namely I was wearing a kaftan dress… There was an incident, some others were fighting and because we expressed our opinion… I saw him and I was speaking in Greek to him and they called the police… somebody from my friends did not have legal documents and we started running… we vanished… And I thought "Do you*

see what happens? Let's say now I have to be afraid… yes to be afraid. Why shouldn't I go around again?" Because I would be so obvious, I was wearing something that made me stand out from the crowd… because I was wearing a kaftan dress. And I never wore it again to move around. So I prefer wearing something else which is not that obvious. But… I noticed the one who caused the trouble was Russian!"

Adapting clothing and fashion is often a strategy to mask overt visibility on the street and avoid police scrutiny (Baird, 2014). Appearance, style and 'body idiom' (Goffman, 1959) become an integral part of what Muslims are trying to communicate in their public display (Hatziprokopiou and Evergeti, 2014). Vicky adjusts her style of wearing the hijab as a turban. This way it appears as a "fashion statement" rather than a visible religious symbol. She also points out that when she was maltreated at the public agency, she was finely dressed with a "shirt, earrings and a belt". However, managing the way she is being seen through fine clothing and fashion and her decent public performance did not really protect her from being perceived as a foreigner or an outsider. Magda has chosen not to wear the hijab or attire that demonstrates her Islamic faith and makes her visible and distinctive in public space. Magda characterises herself a "crypto-Muslim", a Muslim in hiding and feels a need to justify her decision of not wearing the hijab. Magda said: "*Going around at this moment with the hijab, will cause many problems to me".* Her claims to be a 'good Muslim' are undermined by not 'covering' (Ryan, 2013a). When 'covering up' becomes more widely accepted as a sign of piety, there is an implication that only those who adopt this style of clothing can claim a 'true' Islamic identity (Zine, 2006). The more Muslim women and female converts attempted to demonstrate their moral integrity as 'good people' and 'good Muslims', through identifiably religious clothing, the more these women experienced harassment and abuse as violent, dangerous and threatening outsiders (Ryan and Vacchelli, 2013).

Greek converts to Islam are very cautious about the ways they manage the visibility of their social identities at the intersection between the private and public manifestation of religious affiliation that is contingent upon the use of religious symbols, such as donning of hijab for female converts, culturally distinctive attire or other traits (e.g. a beard) for male converts and the adoption of a Muslim name. This suggests the contingency of identity and how interactions in particular places shape the acceptability and validity of specific identity claims. Both women feel that bearing religious symbols or distinctive attire that demonstrate their Muslim faith, makes them vulnerable vis-à-vis the Greek state authorities. Although the adoption of the hijab and the decision to embrace an Islamic identity was continually presented through the language of 'choice' and 'freedom' suggesting individual agency, it is also apparent that these

processes are framed within particular contexts, repertoires and different audience reactions (Ryan, 2013a).

In both narratives, these women are discriminated against as religious outsiders. While Vicky considers that she was abused both because she was wearing a turban and phenotypical characteristics that make her resemble a white East European migrant, Magda considers that she, as a Greek citizen of Muslim religion, attracts more visibility and attention than an East European immigrant. Both she and her husband, Sakis, who is also a Greek convert to Islam, claim that East European migrants are preferentially treated by public authorities at the expense of Muslim migrants. Magda feels more exposed when she is wearing culturally and religiously distinctive attire compared to a white East European migrant. East European migrants who belong to the Christian Orthodox religion are considered more easily assimilable in Greek society than Muslim immigrants. Greek converts to Islam, who have attracted publicity through their appearance in talk shows, publishing in blogs, websites or newspapers and their political activism with the Muslim Association of Greece, have been accused of being "ethnic traitors", namely they have been accused of betraying their Greek nationality. Islam in Greece is identified with Turkish Islam, the religion of the "eternal enemy". Vicky said:

> *"I don't think that people are not tolerant with religion in general as a society. But I think due to propaganda they are connecting Islam A. with the Turks and B. with immigration. They believe that illegal immigrants and in general immigration is the mother of all sins for the Greek economy. Then, there is all this propaganda that if you are Muslim, you are Turk. You are nothing else, just a Turk and that means that you are an enemy of the country, on the other side, you don't love Greece anymore which is very far from the truth. This all makes a negative impact."*

Greek national identity has been historically constructed in opposition to a Muslim 'Other' and Muslim populations living within the country's borders have been historically associated with Turkey and the Turks (Hatziprokopiou, forthcoming). Historical memories and nationalistic feelings are, especially, prompted and revived in the case of Greek – Turkish relationships (Petronoti and Papagaroufali, 2006). Turkish participants recall various incidents in which they had to deal with negative reactions and comments, while other participants had to overcome professional sanctions. Racist, nationalistic and anti-Turkish attitudes make part of popular public discourse, they are repeatedly reproduced in media, while the educational system is criticised for instilling distorted ethnocentric ideas regarding the Greek – Turkish history of war

and animosity. Sila, Turkish, expresses her surprise over diffuse anti-Turkish sentiments in Greek society.

> *"I didn't know that Greeks hate Turks so much. In Greece, there is unreasonable racism against Turkey. But generally, I believe that when you are a racist it is not your fault. It's your society's fault".*

Haditse, Turkish, narrates an incident that took place in the first year of her marriage to her Greek husband when English was still their language of communication. In Haditse's narrative, we can follow an example of public reaction towards a Greek – Turkish couple and observe the change of a Greek woman's attitude when she realises that the English-speaking "beautiful and cute woman" is of Turkish nationality.

> *"There was an old woman at the grocery store and she said "what a beautiful woman you have and how cute she is" and then she says "English, isn't she?" and my husband says "no, she is Turkish" and at that moment the old woman started swearing and asking "how could you marry her?" and my husband said laughingly "next time I'll get married, don't worry, I'll come and ask you whom I marry and whom not"*.

The Turkish woman, who is perceived as a Western European woman because of her fair complexion and her language skills, was assumingly accorded with symbolic status (Lauth Bacas, 2000; Miliarini, 1997). This symbolic status is withdrawn when the Turkish nationality is revealed. The social (in)visibility and multiple positionalities of migrants in Greek society are constructed through characteristics, such as nationality, language skills, class, religion and gender. Even though Greek and Turkish people often invoke geographical proximity, cultural sameness and historical commonalities, nationality renders a Turkish migrant visible and excluded through nationalistic discourses.

Spiros, the Greek husband of Haditse, owns a restaurant in a small town close to the Greek – Turkish border. He claims that his marriage to a Turkish woman had severe professional consequences that he managed to overcome only through hard work over the years. Regular clients stopped going to his restaurant, some people would not even greet him on the street and there was gossip in the local society. Now, almost ten years after he got married, he has managed to restore his reputation and establish one of the best restaurants in town, while, also, due to the increase of cross-border tourism, Turkish customers have been added to his clientele. Spiros, said:

> *"Intense reactions… There were consequences professionally. Because I had to do with the local society, in the beginning… and still some remain, I lost clientele … there was a lot of gossip… Very big consequences professionally. Some people would not even say "good morning"."*

It is interesting to compare the experience of Spiros, who faced professional sanctions and societal barriers due to his intermarriage, to the positive experience of Nicos who is married to Marina, a Turkish woman who converted to Christianity. Nicos, said:

> *"I didn't have difficulties because I could face it… and if at some moment something was said, I overcame it easily. I'm sure that some people could see the struggle that we were making and most comments were positive about us. And even if they were negative, they were getting erased very easily by our environment".*

The experience of Nicos is mostly presented as positive unlike the story of Spiros. The positive comments result from the fact that people could recognise and acknowledge the effort they made to adjust to the Greek society, evidenced by the christening of the Turkish wife. On the contrary, the "struggle" of the restaurant owner to recuperate from the negative consequences on his business was not acknowledged as such. Religious assimilation counteracts nationalistic discourses when the Turkish ethnic other is converted into the religious "ours". Adopting a Christian name is a religious symbol and a public manifestation of religious affiliation. Marina herself chose her Christian name after Saint-Marina and she adjusted promptly and willingly to it. Her parents-in-law and her friends in Greece started calling her after her Christian name, while her Turkish family of origin still call her with her birth name seventeen years after her conversion to Christianity. In terms of visibility and invisibility of social characteristics, a Turkish christened woman, who has adopted a Greek name and has manifested her affiliation to Orthodox Christianity publicly, is rendered "invisible" and she is accepted and included as a religious similar to the dominant Greek Christian Orthodox society.

The few Turkish women who are married to Greek men and reside in Western Thrace often come in contact with minority Muslims. This is an example of interactions between migrants and minorities or between indigenous and migrant Muslims. Turkish educated women married to Greek men enjoy different social status than the minority Muslims of Turkish ethnic origin. Even though Turkish women anticipated encountering hostility from Greek Christians, they actually found that it was harder for the minority Muslims to accept them. Tugba, Turkish Muslim, describes her interactions with local minority Muslim women, who reside in an urban

centre in Western Thrace.

> *"It depends to what kind of people I am talking to. If I am talking to religious people they look strange at me. But other people say "I wish I could also marry with an Orthodox guy but I can't." There are many friendships between Orthodox and Muslims here but they cannot marry. Mostly the Muslim people don't want the marriage... I think that I'm the only one… no we are two Turkish brides, we are not so many… after the second year they started to help me but before that they were concerned, they looked at me a little bit differently. Because they ask me "did you get baptised?" I say no. They ask me "Did your husband get Muslim?" I say no. Strange! Because in Muslim rules, these are very macho rules I think, they say that a Muslim man can get married to a Christian or Jewish woman, the woman doesn't need to go to the Mosque, they can change automatically to Muslim. But the Muslim woman could get married to a Christian man, then she is getting Christian. It's kind of a stupid rule but they are thinking like this so they look at me a little bit differently, as if I came from space! Like I'm an alien! But now we have a good relationship".*

Tugba is seen as a modern Turkish woman who overcame the social expectations of ethnic and religious homogamy and married a Greek man, while she retained her religious affiliation intact. At the same time, she is respected by other minority Muslim girls, who confide in her their desire to intermarry with a local Greek Christian man and their frustration over the resistance to and prohibition of intermarriage in minority Muslim communities. Tugba initially encountered suspicion from the local minority Muslims, but after some time had passed, Muslim women started inviting her in their ceremonies and social gatherings. Reciprocity and exchanges were gradually developed between Turkish immigrants and local minority Muslims of Turkish ethnic origin.

Race is, also, a tenacious issue due to visibility and distinctiveness. While classifying individuals strictly on the basis of physical appearance can become problematic, in most cases whether one belongs to the majority group or that of the minority, s/he has no need to assert her/himself, rather it becomes readily apparent (Ajrouch and Kusow, 2007). The entailed visibility and distinctiveness renders race and skin colour salient divides compared to religion. As Antonis, who is in a long-term cohabiting relationship with a Muslim Roma, Erato, put it succinctly: *"If you saw us, would you think she is Muslim?"*

Discrimination in accessing the housing market is another form of social exclusion of migrants and minorities in Greece (Hatziprokopiou, 2003; Marvakis et al., 2004). Poor housing and living in deprived areas figure as factors of social exclusion of minority Muslims (Imam and Tsakiridi, 2003). Two out of three couples with Greek Christian – Muslim Roma background in the research sample lived in an outer city slum, a Roma settlement at the outskirts of a small city in Western Thrace. The third couple, Antonis and Erato, who chose to reside in the inner city dealt with multiple forms of discrimination and social exclusion. Erato, Muslim Roma, describes her feelings of disappointment and despair caused by people's gossip and reactions to her interracial and interfaith relationship and discrimination and exclusion in housing access, as triggered by the owners' refusal to rent property to them.

> *"We had problems from the outside. Outside of our house… outside of ourselves. Nobody could do anything to help us… only problems they caused us. Imagine to walk and to listen to people talking behind your back… And from the side of my race. We wanted to rent a house… we were paying. The next day I would go to clean… they were asking for the key back. They didn't want to. The moment they were hearing that I'm from inside there, they didn't want to. Without knowing me, without being acquainted to me. How much to endure? How long to resist? I loved somebody from another race… I didn't do anything wrong… I didn't insult them. You think to yourself why would they talk about you without a reason? What difference does my house have from their house? Why do they see things this way? I can't understand."*

In our discussion with Erato, she always refers to "that race" or this place "inside there", but she never puts a name to her race or the place of her former residence, the Roma settlement. This omission lends support to the idea that "this race" is an unspoken shame, a stigma (Goffman, 1963) or an identity that should not require direct reference.

Social visibility has to be understood in relation to how migrants and minorities are excluded through mirroring nationalistic or racialized discourses about culture and difference (Guðjónsdóttir, 2014), such as they are in the cases of Asian migrants, Muslim minorities, Greek converts and Greek – Turkish couples. Race and skin colour are visible characteristics, but being a foreigner is not only a matter of visibility and distinctiveness. A Greek convert or a Greek who has transcended symbolic boundaries through intermarriage can be seen as an outsider, a foreigner or a minority. Discrimination, racism and xenophobia have provoked social exclusion, ontological insecurity and "precariousness" (Bauman, 2007) for some mixed couples.

Transnational social and family networks

Intermarried migrants maintain and sustain ties and interconnected relationships of kinship and friendship in their countries of origin. Geographically dispersed relatives form part of "multi-stranded social relations which link together migrants' societies of origin and settlement" (Baldassar and Baldock, 2000:63). These transnational social relationships link them to their home countries and help them overcome difficulties and further integration problems in the host country (Hatziprokopiou, 2003). Assimilation in the host country and transnational family or community activities can occur simultaneously (Kivisto, 2003; Levitt et al., 2003). There was high variation across personal, family and social networks that mixed couples created in local, national and transnational social fields, depending on factors such as geocultural and geopolitical distance, precariousness of their legal status and intra- and transgenerational family relationships.

Marina, a Turkish convert to Christianity, is an exceptional case of a "marriage migrant" who, as we have seen, has been integrated in the host society, while creating, developing and maintaining highly interrelated and interconnected transnational family, social and professional networks. The first years of Marina's residence in Greece initiated a process of acquisition of social and cultural capital and assimilation within Greek society. The couple was supported and comforted by the Greek in-laws and other family members. Life partners belonging to a different culture or ethnic group and the parents-in-law are often very successful cultural mentors (Nowicka, 2015). She mastered the Greek language, graduated from Law School and by the time of our encounter, she was a practicing lawyer. Marina describes that even though her experience of adjustment in Greece was difficult in the beginning, it gave her the opportunity "most of all to become who she wanted to be". Living in Greece, she felt fulfilled with her personal, family and professional accomplishments. Marina is socially embedded in local and translocal social fields and reports very high life satisfaction.

Marina and her husband have organised transnational living across the borders of Greece and Turkey. Their two children are bilingual and they often get to visit their Turkish grandparents. A Turkish relative provides domestic services and care duties as a stay-in nanny and her mother has acquired a residence permit in Greece. Her interactions with her family are very dense and rely on interrelated care obligations and duties. Marina has developed a network of personal and friendly relationships and professional engagements that extend across the borders. Marina said:

"I'm in and out the country 2-3 times per month. I don't miss my language or my country. I experience both Turkey and Greece at the same time due to professional engagement."

Organising transnational living has enabled her to expand her family, social and professional networks. The geographical proximity of her place of residence to the borders with Turkey and the acquisition of residence permit by family members have facilitated a dense network of interactions, encounters, exchanges and obligations. This particular form of transnationalism opens up the host society to the migrant, who has committed to a life outside their home country because of the presence of a foreign partner, rather than creating any kind of placeless internationally orientated transnationalism (Scott and Cartledge, 2009).

On the other hand, geographical distance, precarious legal status, in particular in the case of refugees and contingency, especially in war-ridden zones (Palestine, Syria, Afghanistan) impedes regular contacts and interactions between the intermarried couple and the Muslim families. The cost and generally greater difficulty of regular contact imposed by longer distances reduces the proportion of immigrants who are able to engage in transnational activities (Portes et al., 1999). Some Muslim migrants and especially, the refugees in the research sample had not visited their families since their departure, sometimes 10 or 15 years ago, and their Greek partners have never met with the Muslim family in person. In such cases, communication is restricted to internet technology. The construction of virtual co-presence over webcam does not seem to compromise intimacy, even when there is not a common language of communication (Baldassar, 2008). Mediated intimacy at a distance often feels very tangible, so people describe not being constrained by the limitations of geographic distance or time (Wilding, 2006). Meni, Greek, recalls when she visited Palestine with her husband and their daughter for the first and only time after 10 years of marriage, she was astonished to experience the level of intimacy that had developed between members of the Muslim in-law family and herself, even though talking over the internet had been their only means of communication. Meni, said:

"When we went there it was as if I knew them normally, such a thing… it was not only the physiognomy, it was as if we were hanging out in the past… very strange."

Before visiting Palestine, Meni had already met two of her husband's brothers who had also migrated to Greece. Intermarried Muslim migrants often have relatives residing in Greece. Established migrants help other family members make informed decisions about their migratory strategies, they may become host to members of the family or other relatives and

organise their professional networks together. In some cases, the intermarriage with a Greek partner is not the only case of intermarriage in the Muslim family. Hassan, Syrian Muslim, says that all his brothers are married to wives from different countries. Migrants build family networks based on communication, exchange of information, solidarity and support.

'Relativising' is a term proposed by Bryceson and Vuorela (2002) to refer to the variety of ways individuals establish, maintain or curtail relational ties with specific family members that are created by active pursuit or passive negligence of familial blood ties and the possible inclusion of non-blood ties as family members. Based on particular intra-household needs, participants strategically choose to emphasise connections with relatives who can offer domestic or child care services as we have seen in the case of Marina. On the other hand, they purposefully neglect blood ties or kinship with relatives who have criticised or disapproved of their choice of an ethnic and religious diverse partner. For example, at the Greek – Turkish wedding of Tugba and Stefanos, subsequent to provoking gossip and initiating discussion on whether the Greek husband would be circumcised, these relatives were excluded from the close family.

The concept of border crossing expansion of social ties also helps to enrich our understanding of immigrant integration in the political and cultural realms (Faist, 2000). Family networks expand from the mixed couple, to the extended families and diffuse the paradigm of mixed families into social fields. We need to acknowledge the ties reaching back to the countries of origin and forth to the countries of permanent residence (Faist, 2000) and see them as intertwined through the figure of the migrant (Nowicka, 2015). As intermarriage connects the family and social networks of the two spouses, the expansion of family and social ties apply to a range of social exchanges maintained by family and kinship groups. Sila, Turkish, argues that her mixed relationship affects relatives and other people who are prone to be more open-minded and less racist by interacting and communicating with her Greek husband.

> *"I'm more hopeful about the next generation because they will live more open-minded. Not only my kids, but also my sister's kids… they will see that we are connected together, we can communicate and they will not be racists. You are also affecting the people around you, the relatives. You are opening other people's minds too and it is a good thing. I like this. It is not a mission… but I think that you are affecting everyone"*.

Intermarriage, transnational family networks initiated by mixed marriages and mixedness, as an encompassing term of ethnic, cultural and religious diversity in conjugal and family context, carries potential for multi-stranded sociocultural transformations. As Matthijs Kalmijn (1998:

307) has phrased it, *"What makes intermarriage sociologically relevant lies in its inherent dynamic: It is not just a reflection of the boundaries that currently separate groups in society, it also bears the potential of cultural and socioeconomic change."* The diffusion of the paradigm of mixed Christian – Muslim families in transnational and translocal social fields is bound to "affect everyone" through interactions, exchanges, reciprocity and associational networks.

Conclusion

This chapter takes the discussion beyond a simple focus on religion to explore wider social visibility and racism debates. Intermarriage has acquired social visibility in Greek society. There are antithetical social processes of increasing interactions and intermarriage between diverse ethnic, social and religious groups, while there is simultaneous resistance to mixedness, demonstrated by phenomena of xenophobia and racism. Intermarriage creates interconnected integration and transnationalism placed in social fields in the country of origin and the country of residence intertwined through the kinship interactions, exchanges, encounters and obligations of the mixed couple with kith and kin.

Some mixed couples are more integrated in Greek society than others. Integration in Greek society is impeded by xenophobia, racism and discriminations that are targeted towards socially visible migrants and minorities, such as Muslim immigrants, minority Muslims, Greek converts to Islam and Greek - Turkish couples through racialized and nationalistic discourses. Risk and precariousness are associated with intermarriage in the prevailing circumstances of economic and humanitarian crisis in Greece and alarmingly increased physical racist attacks against migrants and minorities. Mixed couples acquire cultural and social capital that is flexible and transferable among transnational family and social fields and can influence their strategies of settlement or migration and may affect everyone surrounding them.

Chapter 8

Conclusions

In the context of migration in Greece, Evergeti, Hatziprokopiou and Prevelakis (2014:381) have called for more research focusing on the daily interactions and intimate encounters both among different groups of Muslims and between Muslim migrant groups and indigenous Greeks, whether religious or secular, in shared spaces. My doctoral research is the first systematic empirical research in the Greek and international literature on mixed Christian - Muslim relationships in Greece. In-depth semi-structured interviews with forty participants 'gave voice' to 'silenced strangers within' Greek society, such as Muslim immigrants, native Muslims, women and converts who are racialized due to their social visibility and their phenotype. I interviewed both conjugal partners in mixed relationships and acquired both female and male perspectives and narratives of negotiations, strategies and adaptation from both majority and minority populations, in the sending and in the receiving context.

My research has produced novel data and has contributed knowledge to the family formation process in Christian - Muslim relationships in Greece, starting from trajectories and awakenings to mixedness and extending to transnational intergenerational relationships, negotiations of religious, ethnic and cultural identifications and practices in the context of conjugal mixedness and religious conversion from Islam to Christianity and from Christianity to Islam. It further elaborates on religious and cultural transmissions to children in mixed families, processes of integration, embeddedness and incorporation of mixed couples in Greek society and social visibility and social exclusion in the midst of the economic and humanitarian crisis in Greece. In the next section, I shall discuss how bringing religion into the analytical focus as a social signifier of mixedness has offered new insights and contributions to knowledge to the intermarriage literature.

Religion as a social signifier of mixedness

Religion is a dominant attribute in social relations, including intermarriage, in Greece and figures prominently in the negotiations of mixedness and practices in mixed relationships. The many facets of cultural, ethnic, religious and racial mixedness are externally defined by historical, political and social differentiations (Collet, 2012; 2015), hence the specific processes and outcomes of mixedness will depend on the Greek context. Many scholars have argued about the macro-sociological dynamics of intermarriage to bring about multi-stranded sociocultural transformations (Kalmijn, 1998; Rodríguez-García, 2015; Song, 2009; 2015). In the specific Greek context, mixed marriages counteract nationalistic discourses on the endogamous reproduction and imageries of the homogeneity of the Greek family. Mixed Christian - Muslim families can challenge the construction between Greekness and Orthodox Christianity, by reproducing and transmitting "mixed" cultural and religious understandings and belongings. Mixed marriages between Greek citizens of Christian and Muslim religion are also seen as culturally and ethnically different and they bear the potential to reverse the social exclusion of members of ethnic minorities.

As highlighted in the literature review chapter, a range of terms and interrelated concepts have proliferated in sociological literature to describe intermarriage. Definitions, concepts and typologies of cross-border marriages are problematic in that they are essentialising and are privileging nationality, culture and ethnicity as markers of cross-border marriages. In an attempt to avoid culturally and religiously essentialist terms and concepts that describe marriages that cross borders, I have used the terms intermarriage and mixedness. "Mixedness" is seen as a more encompassing and complex concept, which refers not just to outcomes but also to the processes of "mixing"; it not only describes the combination of national, racial, cultural, or religious differences but also signifies an active space that disturbs and contests social norms (Collet, 2012; 2015; Edwards et al. 2012; Rodríguez-García 2015).

The majority of research on intermarriage has focused on interethnic or bi-national and interracial marriages, especially in the American and French literature. Very few studies in Europe have examined marriages between Muslim men and Western women as in the case of mixed marriages between Western women and Palestinian men (Roer-Strier and Ben Ezra, 2006), Western women and Pakistani men (Khan, 1998) or Arab - Jewish couples (Abu-Rayya, 2000). My research on Christian - Muslim relationships in Greece identified this gap in the literature on religious intermarriage and brought religion into the analytical focus as a social signifier of mixedness.

My research has linked mixed family formation with Muslim migration and the indigenous Muslim minority communities, engaging with nuanced and subtle dimensions of conjugal mixedness. Analysing mixed marriages in Greece according to the institutional affiliation to Islam or Orthodox Christianity captured Christian – Muslim intermarriage with different Muslim populations: Muslim- born immigrants of various nationalities, indigenous West Thracian Muslims and Greek Christian-born converts to Islam. There are certain 'methodological' considerations in discussing comparatively the Muslim minority and Muslim migrants in the Greek context (Hatziprokopiou, 2016). Muslim-born immigrants in the research sample originate from the Near and Middle East and South East Asian countries. West Thracian Muslims originate from native indigenous populations with Greek citizenship rights and most of them identify with Turkey as their symbolic home-state. These populations feature ethnic and cultural variations in the Islamic world and distinctive understandings and perceptions of religious identity in Arab Islam, South East Asian Islam, Balkan and Turkish Islam and the emerging Greek Islam.

Collet (2012; 2015) has characterised nationality as an "unsatisfactory criterion" for measuring mixed marriages. Even though citizenship or residency status will impact on how cross-border marriages are experienced (Williams, 2012), citizenship is not adequate to define if a couple is mixed or non-mixed (Collet, 2012). If my research on mixed marriages relied on the nationality or citizenship of the conjugal partners, citizenship would conceal marriages between members of the Muslim minority and Greek majority ethnic population or naturalised third country nationals who all hold Greek citizenship. As Collet (2012) has argued same citizenship may conceal cultural (or religious) differences, whereas different citizenship may hide cultural (and religious) similarities.

Moreover, research on interethnic or bi-national marriages has treated nationality as fixed and static ethnic categories, while reducing migrants to ethnic and cultural representations of their countries of origin and overlooking complexities in gender and class in the sending countries. Similarly, the public discourse on Muslim migrants in Greece treats them as a homogenous group, equating religion to ethnicity and thus, constructing the Muslim other as an ethnic category (Hatziprokopiou, 2016). Trubeta (2003) has argued that Muslim migrants in Greece are being "ethnicised" like the Muslims of Western Thrace have been "minoriticised". Instead of "ethnicising" Muslim migrants in Greece (Trubeta, 2003), my research has highlighted the ethnic origin of each Muslim in the research sample. It has presented native and migrant Muslims as belonging to ethnic and religious groups and communities, without obscuring subethnic divisions and intraethnic and intercommunity dynamics. Moving beyond essentialisation of religion, it has considered multiple effects of 'othering' processes on ethnic, cultural, racial and religious grounds. Although all participants were recruited to this study in

terms of their institutional affiliation with Christian Orthodox religion or Islam as their religion of origin, my research has not treated religious affiliation as normative, essentialist and determinant religious categories. It has respected multiple, complicated, dynamic and negotiable self-identifications with ethno-cultural and religious affiliations, gender and class.

Instead of "externally" imposing identifications, categorisations and labels, social researchers on intermarriage should consider how mixed couples “negotiate their internal and external visions of mixedness” (Collet, 2015). Mixed couples are simultaneously interreligious, intercultural, interethnic and/or interracial. Whereas a mixed couple could externally be seen as interreligious, conjugal partners in a mixed relationship may primarily identify with other social signifiers, such as ethnicity, political and historical divides, race, social status and lifestyle choices. When religious discourse is not the dominant discourse within the mixed family, conjugal mixedness is contingent upon ethnic, cultural and ideological significations. In that case, ethnic and cultural diversity within mixed relationships will take place in non-religious context. Religion becomes the primary social signifier of conjugal mixedness, when it provides the moral principles and values, acquiring normative salience in the family framework. Religious conversion usually takes place and conservative religious partners organise their lives in homogamous family settings. Religious homogamy through religious conversion from Christianity to Islam or from Islam to Christianity attains common religious affiliation between conjugal partners. However, despite common religious affiliation, couples will still need to negotiate their ethnic, cultural and religious understandings.

Religion, and in particular, Islam, as a social attribute of mixed marriages, has also indicated a shift in gender dynamics in marriage migration and family formation and has shed light on conjugal choices of male Muslim migrants. Gender roles, attitudes, expectations, as well as gendered religious prohibitions, define social norms of marital exogamy. Gender roles emerged strongly in the analysis of trajectories to intermarriage, religious conversion, and cultural and religious transmissions to children and family reactions to exogamy. Trajectories of Muslim migration to intermarriage are predominantly male. Reflecting the characteristics of Muslim migration to Greece, post-migration family formation concerns mainly permanent or asylum-seeking Muslim migrants in married or cohabiting relationships with Greek women. The congruence of geocultural distance, nationalistic divides and religious conversion, mostly of Greek women to Islam provoke acute family reactions to female exogamy.

Religiosity intersects with gender, power and agency in intimate relationships. Muslim women in mixed relationships have exercised their independence and agency through mobility for education and travel purposes which has broadened their conjugal choices. They are mostly of

Turkish ethnicity and secular background. Their desire to form families drives them to take risks and often, breach temporarily social and family ties. Conjugal choices of Muslim women are a sociological example of agency upon structures, contesting social structures, social and religious norms of endogamy, cultural and family values. Minoritisation and stigmatisation further complicates the intersection between gender and power in mixed relationships in Greece as evidenced from the cultural, ethnic and religious intergenerational transmissions in mixed Christian - Muslim families. While men in mixed relationships assert their ethnic, cultural and religious affiliations in transmissions to their children with the agreement of their female partner, minority Muslim fathers dealt with the disaffiliation of their children from Islam as an opportunity to avoid stigmatisation attached to the minority status and to integrate the children within Greek society.

Religion as a social signifier of intermarriage has revealed complicated border crossings through institutional conversion. My research has approached conversion as interconnected to the family formation process. Conversion narratives from both the convert and the convert's partner have enabled analysis of the interplay between affective bonds and cultural and religious negotiations. My research has offered examples of conversion both from Christianity to Islam and vice versa. Conversion to Christianity differs analytically from conversion to Islam. Religious conversion from Islam to Christianity has emerged as a subject of negotiation in mixed couples between Greeks and their partners, in their majority, Muslim minority women of Turkish ethnic origin or Muslim women of Turkish nationality, while conversion from Christianity to Islam has emerged in mixed couples between Greek women and Muslim migrants from Arab or South East Asian countries. Conversion to Christianity is often seen as a social assimilation mechanism with the adjustment of the migrant or minority partner to the dominant religion that is potentially rewarded with the improvement of the socioeconomic position of the migrant partner. On the contrary, Greek converts to Islam transcend the demarcating lines "between people, sovereignty and citizenry" (Wimmer and Glick-Schiller, 2002). Greek women or men who convert to Islam undergo processes of minoritisation and racialisation and ‘become’ foreigners or ‘strangers within’. While converts to Christianity are well-integrated in Greek society, Greek converts to Islam have been victims of discriminations.

There are at least two implications from the analytical difference of conversion to and from Islam. First, religion, in particular Islam, the most divisive barrier in Europe, is "racialized"; merely "looking Muslim" becomes a low-status racial attribute, as the appearance is associated with negative stereotypes and prejudices (Rodriguez-García, 2015). Second, processes of social exclusion impact on the majority partner, who has chosen to be with a foreigner or an "outsider" (Collet, 2015; Rodriguez- García, 2015). Social processes of exclusion

and social visibility do not result only from 'being' a foreigner or an immigrant, but also result from ‘being with’ a foreigner or an immigrant. As Kofman (2004) has argued, the legal and social position of citizen women is determined by the nationality and ethnicity of their spouses intersecting with their gender.

My study has revealed a wide repertoire of moral, cultural and religious systems, from traditional wedding customs to modern patterns of family types that co-exist in Greek society. The many facets of differentiation in mixed Christian and Muslim relationships in Greece will be combined to produce forms of conjugal mixedness. Mixed couples adapt and adjust in the specific national context with multiple strategies identifying themselves with different belongings and cultural values. Conjugal choices in mixed couples are augmented by embeddedness in multiple legal and political institutions and morally fulfilling possibilities in transnational or translocal social fields. Mixed relationships may be cosmopolitan spaces as examples of reflective modernity or they may be considered as social malaise. Social class will determine if mixedness will be externally viewed as cosmopolitanism or mixedness will not be valued as such.

Intermarriage takes place in a social world of structured and gendered inequalities. Heterogeneity, inequalities, asymmetries and hidden hierarchies are reflected at the intersections between gender, race, ethnicity, class, religion and culture. Mixed marriages are characterised by fluidity, shape-shifting (Spickard, 2015), mobility, border crossing and mixedness. My research has underlined the need to challenge, criticise and contextualise dichotomies and go beyond formalistic categorisations such as Muslim and Christians. It has acknowledged the multi-directionality of interactions and exchanges in social networks, embeddedness and accommodation in Greek society. The essence of mixedness in intimate relationships can only be perceived beyond inflexible categorisations of ethnicity, culture and religion.

Future research

Much research remains to be done in the field of intermarriage and migration in Greece. Migration research in Greece has primarily focused on the history and characteristics of migration, quantifying migration flows and considering migration as transition. The description of immigration as a new phenomenon in Greece has impeded research on the settlement, integration and embeddedness of migrants within Greek society, encounters and interactions between Muslim immigrants and native populations and the practice of Islam in Greece. Some

research on marriages between Greeks and Western Europeans has been mostly empirical and fragmented. The study of Petronoti (2006; 2007) and Petronoti and Papagaroufali (2006) has focused on a generation of political refugees from Turkey of Turkish or Kurdish ethnicity, while contemporary mixed Greek – Turkish marriages are mostly between young, educated and secular "love migrants". The study on Greek – Turkish marriages needs to be brought up to date and be informed by "post-earthquake rapprochement" between the two countries, instead of reproducing ethnocentric and nationalistic historical accounts that have been contested through anthropological research.

More research is needed on the socioeconomic characteristics of intermarriage in Greece, the integration, embeddedness and incorporation of mixed couples in Greek society and transnational and translocal social networks of Muslim migrants in Greece. In the tradition initiated by Trubeta (2003) and Antoniou (2003) and brought forward by Triandafyllidou (2010) and Evergeti and Hatziprokopiou (forthcoming as cited in Evergeti et al., 2014), there is a need to further contest ethnic categorisations and national constructions of Greekness through comparative research.

Comparisons across ethnic groups and their use of family networks in migration (Ryan, 2009; 2013b; 2015; Ryan et al., 2009) can produce valuable insights that can be applied to comparisons of migrant communities with various ethnic, cultural and religious characteristics and comparisons between migrant and minority communities. There is a lack of research on the most numerous mixed marriages between Greeks and Albanians and mixed marriages between Greeks and East Europeans. The research field on marriage and migration could benefit from comparative research on mixed marriages between Greeks and other migrant populations. Comparative research could, especially, offer insight to the integration of mixed families in Greece based on their social visibility and their phenotype.

Another emerging field of research in mixed marriages concerns children of mixed background and intergenerational relationships between children and the extended family. Marriage migration and family formation research field needs to consider family formation disruption and fragmentation or transnational families in the light of the economic crisis, since there is evidence that migrants have been affected more negatively than the native population by the economic crisis (Hatziprokopiou, 2015). Research of mixed marriages and family migration needs to overcome the destination countries fixation and re-contextualise research findings both in the destination and origin, family and migration context.

Appendices

STUDY ON RELIGIOUS PRACTICES IN MIXED CHRISTIAN - MUSLIM COUPLES IN GREECE

MPhil/PhD Research

You are being invited to take part in a Middlesex University PhD research. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with your partner or others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

The purpose of the study: This PhD study aims to establish a fuller understanding of the religious practices of Christian - Muslim couples in Greece. The study will use (40) interviews to gather the required information.

Why have I been approached? We would greatly appreciate your involvement in the project, through participation in an interview. We are approaching a range of people, and believe that your experiences will shed valuable light on the project's aims.

Do I have to take part? It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. Even If you decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

What will happen to me if I take part? We will ask you to participate in an individual interview. You may also be contacted to participate in a focus group interview. The length of the interview will be determined by you, but as a guide, we may expect the average interview to last for duration of 60 to 90 minutes. In the interview, we will ask you some questions relating to your religious practices, religious customs and traditions in your family. In the interests of accuracy and fairness, the interview will be recorded, transcribed, anonymised, archived and securely stored.

What are the benefits of taking part? You will know that you have made a valuable contribution to our understanding of the religious practices in mixed Christian - Muslim couples. Many participants find that having the chance to talk about themselves and their opinions at length during interviews was both interesting and helpful for themselves. You may find that contributing to a worthwhile research is personally empowering.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential? All information that is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. Any information about you which is used will have your name and address removed so that you cannot be recognised from it. All data will be anonymised (personal identifiers will be removed and replaced with pseudonyms), stored, analysed, reported and securely archived in compliance with the UK Data Protection Legislation and the ethical regulations of Middlesex University London.

What will happen to the results of the research study? In order to ensure that your participation is fully rewarded, the researcher aims to disseminate the findings as extensively as possible. This will include: PhD thesis, academic presentations, seminars, publishing articles within appropriate academic journals and other publications. All research findings will be rendered both confidential and anonymous across all these outputs.

Who has reviewed the study? The project, at all its stages, has been reviewed and supported by the Middlesex University, School of Law, Research Ethics Committee.

Contact for further information

Prof. Louise Ryan, Co-Director of the Social Policy Research Centre, School of Law, Middlesex University, The Burroughs, London, NW4 4BT, +44 (0)20 8411 5552, l.ryan@mdx.ac.uk

STUDY ON RELIGIOUS PRACTICES IN MIXED CHRISTIAN - MUSLIM COUPLES IN GREECE

MPhil/PhD Research

CONSENT FORM

I ……. confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet and that I agree to participate in this research study. I understand that I am free to refuse to answer any questions and withdraw from the study at any time without giving any reasons.

I understand that:

- The research data will be completely anonymised, with all participants' personal identifiers (name, residential location, place of employment etc.) being changed to protect confidentiality
- The anonymised data will be archived and securely stored
- The research results will be disseminated via the PhD thesis, public and academic presentations, seminars, publishing articles within appropriate academic journals and other publications.

I confirm that quotations from the interview can be used in the PhD thesis and other publications. I understand that the quotations will be used anonymously.

I wish to be contacted as part of a focus group interview: Yes □ No □

Signature: Date:

Contact for further information

Prof. Louise Ryan, Co-Director of the Social Policy Research Centre, School of Law, Middlesex University, The Burroughs, London, NW4 4BT, +44 (0)20 8411 5552, l.ryan@mdx.ac.uk

Demographic questionnaire

PhD student: Dora Papadopoulou, Middlesex University London, NW4 4BT.

This research is supervised by Prof. Louise Ryan, Prof. Eleonore Kofman, Dr. Panos Hatziprokopiou

Date/time: _____

Setting: _____

Participant Code: _____

Are you: male or female

1. How old are you? …… years
2. Are you: married cohabiting How many years? ……
3. In which country were you born? .....
4. What is your primary language? .....
5. Do you speak a language other than Greek at home?

   No, only Greek Yes If yes, please specify .....
6. How long have you been living in Greece? …… years
7. What is the highest level of education you have completed? .....
8. Do you have children? No Yes

   If yes, how many and what age are they? .....
9. Are your children living in Greece Elsewhere Please specify: .....
10. Who else lives in your household?

    Children Brothers/sisters other relatives Non-family members

    No-one else

11. Are you currently in paid employment?

Yes Please specify employment sector: .....

No Please specify: Unemployed Retired Other .....

12. What is your current religion?

Islam Christian Orthodox Atheist Agnostic

Other If other, please specify .....

13. Have you always identified with this religion?

Yes No If no, please specify your previous religion.....

Sample Population Report

CODE	PSEUDONYMS	AGE	RELATIONSHIP STATUS	NATIONALITY	RELIGION OF ORIGIN	RELIGION OF DESTINATION	TYPE OF RELATIONSHIP	EDUCATION LEVEL	OCCUPATION CATEGORY
1F	Nefeli	29	Married	Greek	Orthodox	Atheist	Mixed	Graduate	Out of work and looking for work
2M	Amer	28		Palestinian	Muslim	Atheist	Mixed	Graduate	Employed for wages
3M	Daysam	43	Married	Palestinian	Muslim	Atheist	Mixed	PhD	Out of work and looking for work
4F	Meni	35		Greek	Christian	Agnostic	Mixed	Postgraduate	Employed for wages
5F	Haditse	37	Married	Turkish	Muslim	Muslim	Mixed	Graduate	Employed in family business
6M	Spiros	45		Greek	Orthodox	Orthodox	Mixed	Graduate	Self-employed
7M	Alekos	31	Married	Greek	Orthodox	Orthodox	Mixed	Vocational diploma	Employed for wages
8M	Yiannis	43	Married	Greek	Orthodox	Agnostic	Mixed	Graduate	Employed for wages
9F	Anna	27	Non-married	Greek	Orthodox	Orthodox	Mixed	Postgraduate	Employed for wages
10M	Kaihan	26		Afghan	Muslim	Muslim	Mixed	High school graduate	Employed for wages
11M	Abdalah	65	Married	Jordan	Muslim	Muslim	Mixed	Graduate	Employed for wages
12F	Tugba	41	Married	Turkish	Muslim	Muslim	Mixed	Graduate	Self-employed
13M	Stefanos	40		Greek	Orthodox	Orthodox	Mixed	Graduate	Out of work and looking for work
14M	Nicolas	37	Married	Greek	Orthodox	Orthodox	Homogamous	Graduate	Employed for wages
15F	Marina	34		Turkish	Muslim	Orthodox	Conversion	Graduate	Professional
16M	Antonis	65	Non-married	Greek	Orthodox	Orthodox	Mixed	No schooling completed	Self-employed
17F	Erato	40		Greek Roma	Muslim	Muslim	Mixed	No schooling completed	Homemaker
18F	Stavroula	45	Married	Greek	Orthodox	Orthodox	Mixed	High school graduate	Homemaker
19M	Alis	29	Non-married	Greek	Muslim	Muslim	Mixed	No schooling completed	Out of work and looking for work
20F	Zoitsa	34		Greek	Orthodox	Orthodox	Mixed	Graduate	Employed for wages

21M	Petros	26	Non-married	Greek	Orthodox	Orthodox	Mixed	No schooling completed	Out of work and looking for work
22M	Memetis	58	Married	Greek	Muslim	Muslim	Mixed	Vocational diploma	Employed for wages
23F	Smaro	72	Married	Greek	Orthodox	Orthodox	Homogamous	High school graduate	Homemaker
24M	Akis	35	Married	Greek	Muslim	Muslim	Mixed	Vocational diploma	Employed for wages
25F	Sofia	35		Greek	Orthodox	Orthodox	Mixed	Vocational diploma	Homemaker
26F	Vicky	31	Married	Greek	Orthodox	Muslim	Conversion	PhD	Employed for wages
27M	Hassan	31		Syrian	Muslim	Muslim	Homogamous	No schooling completed	Employed for wages
28M	Sakis	47	Married	Greek	Orthodox	Muslim	Conversion	High school graduate	Employed for wages
29F	Magda	43		Greek	Orthodox	Muslim	Conversion	High school graduate	Professional
30M	Fahruk	47	Married	Saudi Arabia	Muslim	Muslim	Homogamous	High school graduate	Self-employed
31F	Stella	31	Married	Greek Cypriot	Orthodox	Muslim	Conversion	Postgraduate	Homemaker
32M	Amrida	33		Indian	Muslim	Muslim	Homogamous	Postgraduate	Employed for wages
33M	Salih	57	Married	Egyptian	Muslim	Muslim	Homogamous	Vocational diploma	Employed for wages
34F	Maria	39		Greek	Orthodox	Muslim	Conversion	Graduate	Employed for wages
35F	Polina	34	Married	Greek	Orthodox	Orthodox	Mixed	Graduate	Employed for wages
36M	Karem	30		Egyptian	Muslim	Muslim	Mixed	Graduate	Out of work but not currently looking for work
37F	Sila	29	Married	Turkish	Muslim	Muslim	Mixed	Graduate	Out of work but not currently looking for work
38M	Yiorgos	34		Greek	Orthodox	Orthodox	Mixed	Graduate	Employed for wages
39M	Faisal	30	Non-married	Palestinian	Muslim	Muslim	Mixed	Graduate	Employed for wages
40F	Katerina	30		Greek	Orthodox	Orthodox	Mixed	Graduate	Out of work and looking for work

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